



Long-term and Contemporary
Perspectives of Transport, Traffic and
Mobility

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Launching the Digital Alternative Mobility Monitor (DMM)

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Abstract

At the T2M conference in Eindhoven, a transnational team of mobility experts from North America and Europe will introduce the Digital Alternative Mobility Monitor (DMM), a shared online platform dedicated to capturing and exchanging practical insights into the urban and extra-urban mobility transition. Unlike traditional initiatives that rely solely on quantitative indices, the DMM is designed to collect detailed narrative accounts of innovative practices-stories that illustrate real-world shifts from conventional mobility to more sustainable and socially just alternatives, as well as a limited amount of quantitative indicators of the transformation towards more sustainable and just mobilities. Thus, DMM monitors the pulse of changing mobility cultures.

The platform's core innovation lies in its open, inclusive structure. It invites a diverse range of stakeholders-from researchers, urban architects, and mobility planners to public administrators, transport managers, and everyday road users and non-users-to contribute their experiences, thus co-constructing a digital imaginary of the transition over the course of many years and in a multitude of countries and regions. By documenting and discussing mobility practices, the DMM aims to showcase a wide spectrum of sustainable mobility solutions, without limiting its focus to any single one. Instead, it welcomes all narratives that illustrate the emergence of a new mobility paradigm that is both ecologically sustainable and socially equitable.

During the panel session, a live demonstration of the DMM website will highlight three main functions:

- Annual Survey and Data Collection: Engaging a worldwide network of national panels, the platform will facilitate an annual survey that gathers in-depth data on mobility practices.
- Narrative Exchange: Panel members will be invited to share and discuss their innovative practices, creating a dynamic forum for the exchange of ideas and best practices.
- Mediation Between Theory and Practice: Serving as a connective hub, the platform and its researchers will bridge the gap between academic research and practical implementation, benefiting both scholars and practitioners by fostering a dialogue that translates theoretical

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insights into actionable strategies and feeds back such strategies into theory. Representatives from Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and the United States are expected to join this vibrant discussion, contributing to a truly international conversation on the future of urban mobility. These representatives are: Hans Liudger Dienel, Étienne Faugier, Mathieu Flonneau, Paolo Giardullo, Per Lundin, Peter Norton, Hugo Pereira, Luísa Sousa, Aristotle Tympas, Donald Weber.

Keywords: monitor

Challenges and strategies of car-less and car-free parenting in Polish metropolitan areas

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Abstract

In car-centred societies, especially outside urban centres, being an adult without a car is the exception. However, it is essential to examine this condition in order to understand the causes of car dependency and to explore possible solutions to address it.

Not having a car tends to occur in two very different circumstances, reflected in Brown's distinction between car-free and car-less households. While the former have the freedom to choose to live without a car, which is often associated with a decent level of economic and cultural capital, the latter, who are much more numerous, do not have a car because of certain constraints such as insufficient income, unemployment, lack of a driving licence. For the car-less, living without a car often leads to at least some degree of transport poverty, more so in rural areas and less so in urban areas. Car-free living tends to be a lifestyle niche or an emerging trend, located mainly in metropolitan areas and made possible by favourable material and social conditions. Both types of car-free parenting pose certain challenges, some of which are common (e.g. the need to confront critical normative evaluations) and some of which are very different (e.g. the available range of substitutes for car trips to places that are not easily accessible). In our mixed-methods research, conducted in two Polish metropolitan areas between 2023 and 2025, we analyse and compare what car-less and car-free parents face in meeting their and their children's needs, and what strategies they develop in this process. This has certain implications for policy planning, as it shows that in order to limit car dependency and its environmental impacts, we need to address the current inequalities in the potential to satisfy mobility-related needs and determine one's own living conditions.

As mobility patterns and related expectations tend to be gendered, we include the perspective of both parents. The research builds on the study of biographical trajectories of car-free parents presented at the last T2M conference and draws on data from the research project 'Travel behaviour in Polish cities: causality, behavioural changes, and climate impacts' funded by the National Science Centre in Poland (2020/37/B/HS4/03931).

The paper is supposed to be a part of the session "Families and Cars: Backgrounds, Consequences, Alternatives". As we were not sure if it was included in the session proposal, we are submitting it here as well, just in case.

Keywords: car, car dependence, families, parenting, transport poverty

^{*}Speaker

Families and Cars: Backgrounds, Consequences, Alternatives

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Abstract

In many societies, private car travel has become firmly entrenched as the dominant mode of transportation for families with children. Cars are often regarded as the ultimate solution for convenience and speed, particularly for families juggling busy schedules. This is especially true in areas where public transportation falls short or the urban environment discourages walking and wheeling. However, this reliance on cars comes with significant challenges-ranging from environmental impacts and traffic safety concerns to negative effects on physical health.

How did this situation come to be? Are there signs of change on the horizon? This session delves into the enduring connection between families and car travel, exploring the historical development of family car usage, the influence of internal family dynamics, and gendered transportation patterns-examining these aspects across the past, present, and future. Using insights from both past and present, we study the factors that have produced and continue to maintain the car-dependency and car-centered lifestyles of families. Based on existing practices, we also consider possible alternatives to current level of car-use.

Many central aspects of today's societies have a strong linkage to the car-use of families, including housing and living environments, work, leisure and care. Similarly, such central societal questions as equality and justice come into focus when considering the patterns of car-use. Although most family-units in for instance, Europe have at least one car, car-use remains unequally gendered. We argue that paying specific attention to the gendered mobility patterns within families as well as the socioeconomic differences between families can offer keys to find alternatives to the current system of family mobilities.

Presentations:

1. "Baby on Board – Family Cars and Driving Assistance Systems" by Silke Zimmer-Merkle
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2. "Disparity in car-use inside families and the rise of the culture of automobility" by Tiina Männistö-Funk, tiiman@utu.fi

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3. "Investigating Practices of a Car-Centered Family Life" by Jussi Sjögren jussi.sjogren@tuni.fi, Veera Moll veera.moll@tuni.fi
4. "Challenges and strategies of car-less and car-free parenting in Polish metropolitan areas" by Filip Schmidt filip.schmidt@amu.edu.pl, Marta Skowrońska marta.skowronska@amu.edu.pl, *Marianna Kostecka* marta.skowronska@amu.edu.pl & *Michał Czepkiewicz* m.czepkiewicz@uw.edu.pl

Keywords: Car dependency, Gender, Mobility, Children's Active Travel

Investigating Practices of a Car-Centered Family Life

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Abstract

Active school transport offers numerous benefits for children. Whether the journey to school involves walking, wheeling, or using public transport, it enhances children's physical activity, independence, opportunities for play, and social interactions. Additionally, active transport is the most environmentally friendly option. Despite these clear advantages, many children are driven to school by private car. This trend is influenced by factors such as the centralisation of the school network and the car-dependent lifestyle of families.

Given that children have limited decision-making power over their mobility, the values, attitudes, and resources of parents play a crucial role. Factors such as the socio-economic status of families, the length of school and leisure trips, the geographical location of the home, and parents' commuting habits significantly impact the choice of transport mode. To promote active school travel, it is essential to consider the entire family and the broader built environment and society, rather than focusing solely on the individual child.

What ultimately leads parents to choose car use? What are the underlying causes? The CHIFAM Travel research project seeks to enhance the understanding of school travel through multi-level interventions. These interventions include changes in winter maintenance prioritization within the built environment, supported by informational, educational, and social components. Examples of these components are kilometer races, parents' evening programs, and school lessons, aimed at individuals, families, and class groups. We apply practice theory (Kent 2022) in the design and analysis of our interventions. With these, we aim to find out not only the reasons for car use, but also possible ways to reduce car travel and increase children's active school travel.

Veera Moll is a postdoctoral researcher at Tampere University in the Transport Research Centre Verne. Her research interests lie at the intersection of urban and transport planning and individual mobility experiences. Moll is particularly focused on children in urban planning, including children's mobility and play in urban contexts, studying the topic from both historical and contemporary perspectives.

Jussi Sjögren is a doctoral researcher at Verne in Tampere University. His research interest spreads around travel behaviour and experience, general transport system development, and transport policy in combination with decision making. In his doctoral research, he studies how to affect children's transport behaviour efficiently, what are the benefits of increased active school travel, and how are intervention programs implemented and decided upon?

Keywords: Children's Mobility, Active School Transport, Travel Behaviour, Car Dependency, Practice Theory

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Disparity in car-use inside families and the rise of the culture of automobility

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Abstract

The first passenger traffic survey in Finland was carried out in 1974. Its results were published in 1977 and demonstrated an extreme difference in car use between men and women. Whereas men used private car on two thirds of their daily trips, women only used car on one of four daily trips and half of the time as passengers, although women and men were equally represented among those receiving a driving license. Children travelled by car twice as much as women. The number of families with more than one car was very low, but the study also found out that a second car only increased the car use of the children, not of women. During the next 15 years, the differences otherwise evened out, but women continued to walk and use public transportation more than men as well as to travel for shorter distances on a daily basis.

In my presentation I will scrutinize the way in which the disparity in car-use inside families was perceived during the 1970s and 1980s. My main finding is that this disparity was hardly thematized, even in publications criticizing the motorization in general or concentrating on gender issues. Instead, the difference in car-use between women and men was routinely normalized by pointing to different mobility needs and tasks or by simply stating that men were more active or that car driving was one of the tasks that men took care of in families. I argue that the culture of automobility was introduced through its normalized masculinity and as a part of the gender contract, both in the society and the families. However, it also transformed many daily practices of the families. As an example, I will study the practice of grocery shopping that was transformed from a women's task to a family endeavor with the introduction of supermarkets that catered mainly for car-drivers.

(Abstract for the panel "Families and Cars: Backgrounds, Consequences, Alternatives")

Bio:

Tiina Männistö-Funk, PhD is a historian of technology and mobilities. She works at the Department of Finnish History at the University of Turku as an Academy Research Fellow funded by the Research Council of Finland. Her current research deals with the change of Finnish living environments from the point of view of non-motorized modes of transport during the second half of the 20th century.

Keywords: automobility, gender, families, history

*Speaker

Baby on Board – Family Cars and Driving Assistance Systems

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Abstract

Contribution for Sesseion ” *Families and Cars: Backgrounds, Consequences, Alternatives*”

When examining how children moved and were transported in the past, the history of the 20th century cannot be told without the automobile. Whether it was Sunday outings, summer vacations, or the daily school run, the car quickly became a significant and growing part of family mobility. This includes aspects like gendered transportation patterns and mobility biographies that begin very early in life. Throughout the 20th century, the car shaped not only roads but also lives and dreams. From residential choices to leisure activities, the car influenced-and continues to influence-family life and lifestyles.

My contribution explores this special relationship between families and their cars, particularly investigating how the once ”wild” and dangerous ”adventure vehicle” transformed into a family transportation device. Often marketed with comfort and safety-the very keywords used in advertising for driving assistance systems-the family car has evolved significantly. Indeed, there is a connection between the family car and the long history of automotive assistance systems; from their early beginnings, the two have gone hand in hand. Still a symbol of freedom, the automobile had to be enhanced by safety, convenience, and accessibility aspects to become more than just a sport vehicle. With it, social and cultural practices associated with family car travel emerged and changed over time.

Silke Zimmer-Merkle is postdoctoral researcher at the Institute of Technology Futures – History Department at Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT). Her fields of expertise and research interests include history of technology and mobility, as well as cultural history and history of ideas. She has worked and published on the history of driving assistance (<https://doi.org/10.5445/KSP/1000160053>). In her current research project, she investigates historical types and meanings of children’s mobility.

Keywords: kids, families, driving assistance, cars, school run

*Speaker

On Accessibility Fairness in Intermodal Autonomous Mobility-on-Demand Systems

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Abstract

Most applied research exploring justice in the domain of transport has focused on the equity evaluation of existing systems. At the same time, most research on transport planning has been implementing conventional utilitarian paradigms, e.g., minimizing the average travel time of the population, without accounting for fairness. This paper aims to bridge this gap and adds to this literature in two ways: by exploring to what extent the application of different justice principles can enhance the fairness of the transport system; and by focusing on realizing such principles in the operation of transport systems rather than merely assessing a given system design. We use an intermodal Autonomous Mobility-on-Demand (AMoD) system as our case study, where a fleet of centrally controlled self-driving cars provides on-demand mobility synergistically with public transit and active modes (biking and walking). We explore how its operation can improve the situation of users that do not own a car. We first formally define a set of justice metrics that differ in terms of distributive principle and the good of concern. The metrics include: minimization of average travel time for the car-less population (i.e., a population-specific application of utilitarianism); avoidance of unacceptably long travel times for the car-less population in line with a sufficientarian approach; and delivery of reasonable travel times to a sufficient set of destinations. We showcase our framework in a real-world case-study in the city of Eindhoven, the Netherlands. Our results show that, compared to conventional utilitarian minimum-travel-time planning, it is possible to significantly improve the situation of the car-less users without affecting conventional performance metrics such as average travel time. Whilst the differences between the proposed sufficientarian deployment models are rather modest, they highlight intrinsic crucial trade-offs that require further consideration and analysis. Overall, these results underscore the importance of taking a transdisciplinary approach addressing planning problems from conceptualization to modeling and optimization in transport and mobility.

Keywords: Transport Justice, Intermodal Mobility, Future Mobility Systems

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Resilience of Active Mobility Under Climate-Induced Heat Stress

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Abstract

The phenomenon of climate change is becoming increasingly evident through the occurrence of extreme weather events. There has been a marked increase in the frequency and intensity of hot days (temperatures exceeding 30°C), particularly within European cities. This escalation poses significant challenges to urban transportation systems and human well-being, disproportionately affecting vulnerable populations such as the elderly and children. However, sustainable urban transportation strategies are increasingly promoting multi-modality and a mode-shift away from private motorized transport towards active mobility-specifically walking and cycling-as key components of healthier, more sustainable cities.

Despite the well-documented health and environmental benefits of active mobility, there has been a paucity of research on its resilience under heatwaves. This study addresses that gap by developing city-specific walkability and cyclability indices through a multi-criteria geospatial approach in Duisburg, Germany, as a case study. Key environmental and infrastructural variables - including urban greenery, shading from buildings and trees, traffic density, route quality, safety, and access to amenities - were spatially analyzed and integrated within a GIS-based framework. The interaction of these factors under high-temperature conditions was the focus of particular emphasis, to determine whether this interaction either facilitates or hinders active mobility. The resulting indices were visualized in thematic maps to identify zones of varying resilience, offering qualitative and quantitative insights into the built environment's capacity to sustain active transportation during heatwaves.

The findings of this research highlight the critical role of microclimatic urban features, such as shaded pathways and green corridors, in maintaining walkability and cyclability during extreme heat. The present study contributes to the broader discourse on climate-adaptive urban planning by emphasizing the need to integrate thermal comfort and resilience metrics into the design of active mobility infrastructure. Implementing such measures in urban areas has the potential to facilitate the development of transportation systems that are conducive to multiple modes of travel. Furthermore, these measures can promote health and well-being while demonstrating resilience to climate change's impacts.

Keywords: Active mobility, walkability, cyclability, resilience, heat, high temperature, climate change

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Advancing Mobility Justice Through Bikesharing: A Research-Informed Approach

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Abstract

The offering of public bike rental systems – as an alternative mobility solution - exists for decades, but has received new popularity through digitalization. Whether at home or abroad, bike rental systems play an increasingly important role in intermodal trips, especially in urban areas. In intermodal trips different transport means are combined, e.g. a person starts his or her way by foot, switches after a couple of meters to a rented bike to get to a train station, rides a suburban train to a close by city and takes the bikesharing to reach the working location. The example shows that bike rent systems can be a component of a mobility system with reduced car use. Overall, however, only a small subpopulation uses bike rental systems - with women in particular being in the minority. In fact, women use and experience transport systems differently than men, as they are more concerned with issues of accessibility, safety and economic efficiency. The contribution will present **needs and expectations of women** (and men) on bikesharing-systems from the perspective of non-users. The analysis is based on qualitative information, that were collected in focus groups in the service areas of the VRNnextbike and the MVG meinRad rental bikesharing systems. In addition, information from a quantitative CATI-survey and from electronic rent processes is available. This data focus on users perspective exclusively and includes various items of rental bike related gender-specific cognitive views. Amongst other analysis we will present gender specific differences in micro-economic utilities of selected attributes as well as gender specific differences in socio-psychological attitudes, norms and perceived behaviour control. The aim of the research is to identify and increase sensitivity for women's needs into the design of future bikesharing-services as a contribution to an equity based planning approach in terms of gender.

Keywords: bikesharing, qualitative research, urban mobility, gender, micro, mobility, inclusive mobility

^{*}Speaker

From Animate to Iron Hyena Transport? Bicycle as a Regional Transport in Shinyanga, Tanzania.

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Abstract

Use of domesticated animals in transport is universally unexceptional. The use of wild animals that have been tamed is extraordinary and in a very limited scale with the elephants leading the way. There have been informal accounts and ethnic jokes over the Sukuma people of Shinyanga riding on hyenas' back for mobility from point to another. However, in the postcolonial period most of the Sukuma turned to bicycles replacing the purported hyena transport in their short and long travels up to over 100 kilometres. Bicycles dominated in the shortage of motorised vehicles and bad infrastructure. The paper will build on the analysis of oral, ethnographic and written sources on Shinyanga region. It will examine the continuity of mythical rationalities from hyenas to bicycles as well as the bicycle significance in the rural, urban and regional transport.

Keywords: Hyena, bicycle, Sukuma people, rural, urban, transport, mythical rationalities.

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LEVERAGING MICRO-MOBILITY AGAINST SECURITY CHALLENGES IN ABUJA

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ABSTRACT

In recent times, the synergy between commercial transport and the escalating risk of kidnapping, popularly referred to as ‘one chance,’ in Abuja has posed a precarious concern within the city's transportation landscape. The unique status of Abuja as the federal capital territory has contributed to its fast-paced urban growth, attracting an influx of people and investments. However, this rapid expansion has exacerbated critical urban issues, including traffic congestion and heightened security risks. The adoption of innovative and efficient transportation solutions is imperative for improving mobility while safeguarding the city's residents and visitors. Among such solutions, the advent of micromobility services has redefined urban transportation. This evolution in transportation addresses pressing urban challenges, particularly those related to safety and security. The real-time tracking, identity verification, and trip documentation inherent in micromobility platforms are highly instrumental in reducing the risks associated with the traditional modes of transit in Abuja. Despite these advancements, research on leveraging micromobility solutions to address Abuja's specific security challenges remains limited. Existing studies like Environmental Justice: Making a Case for Sustainable and Equitable Urban Mobility in Abuja by Mathias Agbo highlight the potential of technologies like geo-spatial tools and the socio-economic benefits of e-hailing services but often overlook their role in mitigating crimes like "one chance" and kidnapping. Furthermore, little attention has been paid to how micro mobility platforms collaborate with security agencies or utilize advanced technologies like AI and IoT for safety enhancement. Hence, this study seeks to examine the integration of micromobility solutions into security strategies, with a focus on their role in mitigating criminal activities such as “one chance” and kidnapping. Laconically, leveraging advanced technology and partnerships with governmental security agencies, micromobility systems hold the potential to not only enhance urban mobility but also transform Abuja into a benchmark city for safety and innovation in Nigeria’s transportation landscape.

Keywords: Micromobility, Insecurity Challenges, One Chance, Urban Growth

Questioning the Decline of Alternative Mobility Modes in Cameroon's Urban Spaces: Experiences from the Cities of Buea and Yaoundé, 1960-2025

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Abstract

This study examines the factors that have contributed to the gradual decline of alternative modes of mobility and the dominance of automobility modes of transportation in Cameroon's urban space drawing examples from the cities of Buea and Yaoundé. Overtime, automobility modes have taken precedence over other forms of mobility in Cameroon's urban centers. Despite this transformation of city mobilities, much attention has not been directed towards this phenomenon in terms of research that could help in guiding policy especially in this era of threat from carbon emissions and increase in health complications of city dwellers. It is against this backdrop that this paper seeks to discuss the various factors that are responsible for the decline in alternative mobility modes. Using a historical analytical approach guided by primary and secondary data, the paper argues that, the substitution of automobile modes in place of other alternative mobility modes like walking, pedestrianization, horsing, camel and cycling in Cameroon's urban spaces is deeply rooted in unawareness on the part of the city dwellers and lack of urban planification on the part of the government. It concludes that, although automobile modes of transportation maybe easier and yet constitute a threat to human existence, ignorance and lack of urban planification remain the key drivers for its dominance over other modes of transportation even when these have incidence on their health. There is therefore a need for sensitization and focus on nature friendly urban spaces to curb this phenomenon and reprioritize alternative modes of transportation that are healthier for human existence.

Keywords: Alternative Modes, Automobility, Mobility, Decline, Ignorance

*Speaker

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Pedal Power, Multiple Opportunities: Bicycles in Mzuzu City, Malawi, 1947-2024

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Abstract

In April 2015, Mzuzu City in Northern Malawi witnessed serious clashes between police and bicycle taxi operators following a directive by city authorities to ban cyclists from the commercial center, citing traffic safety concerns. Over 300 bicycles were confiscated in this operation, a situation that triggered public outcry and raised questions about the legality and rationale of the crackdown. This chapter examines the long history of bicycles in Mzuzu which often is described as the "City of Bicycles" and their evolving role in the city's socio-economic landscape. The chapter notes that bicycles are not only utilitarian tools of mobility in the city but they are also markers of social and historical identities and economic transformation within the growing city. Drawing on oral sources, archival records from Malawi and Zambia, and secondary literature, the chapter traces the history of bicycles from the colonial period to the post-democratic era. In the 1940s and 1950s for instance, missionaries and colonial officials used bicycles as both modes of transport and symbols of authority; from the 1960s–80s, returning migrants and civil servants relied on them for status and service delivery. In the more recent decades, bicycles have formed the backbone of the informal sector in the city, especially among the youth operating these bicycles as taxis. More to this growing reliance on bicycles as instruments of economic transformation is the fact that this has also generated friction with authorities, whose policies often marginalize non-motorized transport. This chapter therefore argues that Mzuzu's cycling history offers a valuable lens to understand broader processes of mobility, regulation, and urban change. It concludes that city authorities must move beyond punitive enforcement and control over bicycles and instead invest in inclusive infrastructure that accommodates cyclists, thereby supporting sustainable urban mobility, economic empowerment and preserving Mzuzu's unique cycling heritage.

Keywords: Pedal power, Mzuzu, City of Bicycles, urban mobilities

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Mobility Transitions: How to Get There from Where We Are?

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Abstract

Introduction

At the start of the second quarter of the 21st century a worldwide consensus seems in the making that the way we and our ‘stuff’ move and are moved has entered a phase of deep transition. Not only the world vehicle fleet, from cars to trucks, from motorcycles to autorickshaws, from jitneys to mopeds, from buses to airplanes, together emit so much CO₂ that it directly jeopardizes the planet’s climate. At the same time, global fatality and injury rates are still increasing, while locally, traffic congestion worsens the urban crisis, all this against a background of looming disasters in terms of energy provision, wars, and shifts in demographic composition of populations, in the political landscape and geopolitical relations. Most of these trends tend to increase global and local mobility inequalities and mobility injustice.

More than ever (historical) scholarship faces the challenge how to study and to suggest solutions that foster more equitable and just mobilities in terms of gender, race, physical ability and generations. This proposal covers past, present and future suggestions by several senior and well-known mobility scholars, taking as our starting point the existing mobility condition. Formulating ‘alternatives’ only makes sense, we propose, if we start from where we are and think about how we get where we want to be, inspired perhaps by utopian and dystopian fantasies.

Keywords: for Gijs

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The Role of Historical Perspective in Mobility Policy: From Theory to Practice

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Abstract

As mobility systems undergo profound transformations, policymakers increasingly recognize that one-size-fits-all solutions are inadequate for addressing contemporary urban challenges. This paper argues that a historical perspective is essential for designing mobility policies that are not only sustainable and equitable but also tailored to the specific historical and geographical contexts of each city or region. Understanding how mobility systems have evolved over time-shaped by local infrastructures, social practices, and past policy choices-provides crucial insights for crafting solutions that respond effectively to the real needs of citizens.

The paper first explores the theoretical foundations of historical approaches within mobility studies, emphasizing how historical specificity informs more context-sensitive urban policies. It then examines the case of Pontevedra, a city that successfully leveraged its historical urban form to implement a pedestrian-centered mobility model, drastically reducing car dependency while enhancing public space and quality of life. Additionally, the role of global initiatives such as Walk21 in fostering international cooperation and promoting walkability policies will be discussed.

By bridging historical research and policy-making, this paper demonstrates that history is not merely a tool for retrospective analysis but a key resource for shaping future-oriented, citizen-centered mobility strategies. A historically informed approach ensures that mobility policies are not only technically efficient but also socially inclusive, environmentally responsible, and deeply attuned to the specific needs of the communities they serve.

Keywords: Mobility Policy, Historical Perspective, Walkability, Urban Sustainability, Context, sensitive Planning

*Speaker

Detours in the Mobility Transition: Stopping the Fossil Fuel Backlash

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Abstract

The entire world is at a crucial pivotal moment in the mobility transition, in which *the forces against decarbonization are gaining momentum* even as the planet is on the brink of runaway global warming. "Drill, baby, drill!" has become the watchword of the day. The Trump administration in the United States has embraced fossil fuel expansion, promotes aggressive cultures of automobility, as a kind of hypermasculine freedom and has attacked "green new scam" energy subsidies and sustainable transport policies of all kinds. A geopolitical alignment of the USA, Russia, and Saudi Arabia, appears as an axis of fossil fuel power placing immense pressure on Europe as it seeks to shift away from oil and gas toward more renewable energy. This retrograde movement comes on the heels of a period in which many cities and regions have been trying to promote a sustainable mobility transition that would reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG). While progress has been made in many cities, there is also a massive backlash against decarbonization policies. Not only in the USA, but in countries including France, Canada, Australia, and the U.K., people are protesting rising gas prices, challenging congestion charges, resisting bike lanes, and questioning efforts to decarbonize transport. Policies to reduce demand for automobility and other kinds of high-carbon mobility remain on the backfoot, with economic sciences struggling to give up on rising trajectories of growth, engineering sciences continuing to nurture hopes of technological solutions, and political leaders stymied by the rising reactionary forces of "carbon capital" and fossil power. What is the future of the mobility transition in these fraught times and what detours will have to be made? How can we advocate for mobility justice in the face of these challenges? What alternatives exist?

Bio

Mimi Sheller, Ph.D., is Dean of The Global School at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, in Massachusetts. Sheller is an interdisciplinary social scientist with work in Caribbean Studies, Mobilities Research, and Social Theory. Sheller was founding co-editor of the journal *Mobilities*, and past President of the International Association for the History of Transport, Traffic and Mobility. She has published more than 150 articles and chapters, and recent books include *Advanced Introduction to Mobilities* (Edward Elgar, 2021); *Island Futures: Caribbean Survival in the Anthropocene* (Duke University Press, 2020); and *Mobility Justice: The Politics of Movement in an Age of Extremes* (Verso, 2018).

Keywords: Automobility, decarbonization, fossil fuel, mobility transition, policy, sustainability

*Speaker

The Fall and Rise of Walking

Peter Norton^{*†1}

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Abstract

An inclusive, affordable, healthful, and sustainable mobility future must be a future in which walking, cycling and transit are primary modes of everyday passenger transport. The barriers to such a future, however, include predominant but misleadingly selective versions of history that tell us that car-dependent transport, even in cities, was the consequence of mass demand, technological progress, modernism, democracy, or free markets. In the United States, proponents of car dependency found no prospect of achieving it by such means. Instead they pursued what they called a "radical revision of our conception of what a city street is for." To overcome car dependency in the US and elsewhere, we need more accurate histories, which demonstrate that majorities persistently resisted car domination and demanded walkable streets. The Los Angeles Traffic Ordinance of 1925 epitomizes the antidemocratic marginalization of walking, and its centennial is an opportunity to rediscover our history and to apply its lessons.

Bio

Peter Norton is Associate Professor of History in the Department of Engineering and Society at the University of Virginia. As a historian of technology, he specializes in streets, traffic and people. Norton is the author of *Fighting Traffic: The Dawn of the Motor Age in the American City*, and of *Autonorama: The Illusory Promise of High-Tech Driving*. He is former visiting faculty member of the Technical University of Eindhoven and a winner of the Abbot Payson Usher Prize of the Society for the History of Technology.

Keywords: car dependency, pedestrians, traffic, walking

^{*}Speaker

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The narrative behind mobility transition: does academia reflect the discourse of the public?

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Abstract

How do academics talk about mobility transitions? Is the general public discussing similar topics? And are we currently undergoing such a transition? To answer these questions, we adopt a twofold approach. First, we analyze scientific papers that include the term *mobility transition* or *transitions* in their abstract or keywords. From this corpus, we extract sentences containing the word *transition* and perform a sentiment analysis using the predefined VADER dictionary to classify them as positive or negative. We then select the top 25% most negative and most positive sentences and apply quantitative topic clustering to these subsets, generating a preliminary codebook of key themes. In the second phase, we collect social media posts from the platform X (formerly Twitter) and conduct an inductive qualitative data analysis (QDA) to map the public narratives to the codebook topics, identifying whether they reflect support or resistance. Initial findings indicate that the dominant negative clusters in scientific literature include: strategic misalignment between high-level visions and policy/funding instruments (Cluster 0); political lock-ins and institutional resistance to change (Cluster 1); lack of engagement with diverse or vulnerable populations (Cluster 2); conflicts over public space and externalities leading to public resistance (Cluster 3); and insufficient local capacity to operationalize transition strategies (Cluster 4). Our next steps involve summarizing the narratives within each cluster and comparing them with discourses on social media. The ultimate goal is to develop a communication strategy that anticipates key themes of mobility transitions and the likely public responses—both supportive and oppositional.

Keywords: Mobility transition, Sentiment analysis, Public discourse, Scientific discourse

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Decolonising the Discourse on Sustainable Mobility: How to ensure an inclusive transition for female refugees in Germany?

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Abstract

The discourse on sustainable development in transport has expanded immensely in Germany, which plans to achieve 15 million electric vehicles (EVs) on the road by 2030 (Packroff and Carroll 2023). Likewise, the dedicated bike lanes in Munich have encouraged more and more people to cycle, and according to an estimate, it has been a popular modal choice among the city dwellers, resulting in a significant 30 percent increase in bike traffic during the first half of 2023 (Heineke et al. 2023). A lot of research has been conducted to make the city more accessible for people with disabilities and protected characteristics by offering various modes of mobility. This makes Munich an interesting case study for mobility transition where many people now rely on cycling, walking and urban transport rather than private modes. However, despite the current research and the efforts to improve active and sustainable forms of transport, most immigrant and refugee women in Germany are more likely to use non-active modes of transport as their regular mode of transport (TIER 2022). There is no substantial gender and ethnicity-based data on mobility patterns and people-centric narratives to understanding the mobility decision-making of immigrants are scarce. Likewise, there is no study on the travel behavior and choices of non-Western female refugees in Germany and therefore mobility justice cannot be achieved in its true sense. This paper aims to understand the travel decision-making of refugee women in Munich from countries of conflict, in particular Pakistan and Afghanistan. It sets out to investigate the everyday mobility experiences, choices and perceptions of ethnic minority women as compared to the wider population and with regard to their potential for increased sustainable and inclusive travel. It explores these factors by adopting a feminist intersectional theory as a tool for understanding how the intersecting identities (based on age, ethnicity, income status, education and profession) of women directly or indirectly influence their modal choices, and journey patterns and access to life opportunities. The research can thus advance knowledge on how to promote the use of active/sustainable transport among these groups through devising contextual solutions and influencing policy recommendations for improved well-being, safety and economic upliftment of refugee women.

Keywords: inclusive mobility, transport, poverty, gender, sustainability, Germany

*Speaker

Social Impacts of Free Access to Public Transport

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Abstract

This study aims to improve understanding of the social impacts of free public transport, focusing on low-income families with children in Malmö, Sweden. Low-income populations often face limited transport options, lower quality services and poorer travel conditions, which limit access to jobs, education, health care and social networks, potentially creating a 'poverty trap' (OECD, 2017). Recent discussions in the Swedish media have highlighted problems related to public transport fares. For example, a national survey has reported significant increases in the price of public transport, higher than the increase in fuel prices (SVT Nyheter, 2024). At the same time, research shows that households with children are particularly vulnerable to poverty, with transport costs being a major challenge (Rozynek, Schwerdtfeger & Lanzendorf, 2022). A non-profit organisation (dedicated to creating a more humane society for all), together with the public transport authority, provided access to public transport for low-income families in the city of Malmö by distributing summer passes and day tickets for public transport to people on low incomes. The study uses qualitative interviews with participants and organisational representatives to gather experiences and reflections on the initiative. Preliminary results show significant social benefits for the recipients. This research aims to fill the knowledge gap on the social effects of free access to public transport, emphasising equity, contributing to the public debate and informing policy recommendations.

The project is financed by K2 – the Swedish Knowledge Centre for Collective Mobility.

Biography: Vanessa Stjernborg PhD in Transport Planning and master's in human Geography, is an Assistant Professor and Research Leader at Lund University and affiliated to K2. Her areas of research interests include everyday mobilities of different groups, social impact assessment, public transport, diverse geographies, future mobility (new solutions), X-minute city, accessibility for all, qualitative and participatory methods.

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*Speaker

Keywords: Everyday mobility, low, income, children, equity, justice

”A True Transformation” – Discursive Struggles in Print Media about a Social-ecological Transformation of Urban Mobility in Germany

Nora Klinner*¹ and Martin Lanzendorf¹

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Abstract

In response to the climate crises, in many European countries political measures are discussed to achieve a social-ecological transformation of urban transport. Nevertheless, the future vision of mobility present in this planning remains vague as different actors compete to define it in ways that serve their interest. Investigating discursive struggles over what counts as transformation and how competing narratives shape or hinder the transformation of mobility is especially important as public discourse is performative. Media narratives play a crucial role in shaping public perception of mobility alternatives, influencing what appears politically and socially feasible.

For that purpose, we conducted a critical discourse analysis of 213 newspaper articles of two major German daily newspapers (Süddeutsche Zeitung and Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung) in order to identify hegemonic narratives about what a social-ecological transformation should or should not include.

Our findings reveal a bias toward technological fixes in hegemonic discourse, which sustains the dominance of automobility while marginalising alternative mobility futures. Although a mode shift away from car use is discussed, it is primarily framed in terms of its limitations, reinforcing the status quo instead of fostering a true paradigm shift. The narratives on transformation compete for resources and political recognition rather than converging into a shared future vision. A discourse coalition calls for a ‘true transformation’, but this coalition is split. The demand is used by proponents of ambitious car-reduction strategies who genuinely want systemic change. But others use it as a delaying tactic in planning processes by insisting on ever more comprehensive measures, ultimately stalling change.

Keywords: social ecological transformation, narratives, critical discourse analysis, urban mobility

*Speaker

Alternative Mobilities – Traditional Problems: The problematic realization of high-speed cycle paths in North Rhine-Westphalia

Christian Franke*¹

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Abstract

To address traffic and environmental challenges in the urban regions of North Rhine-Westphalia, the state government intensified its efforts to expand bicycle infrastructure in the 21st century. One of the most prominent initiatives in the region's transportation transition was the construction of cycle highways. In 2013, the state government hailed these projects as a "new chapter in traffic planning." Over the following years, plans for seven cycle highways were developed. The goal was to create fast, uninterrupted cycling routes that were well-integrated into existing local bike networks. High standards for road surfaces and exclusive use by bicycles were intended to ensure safe and efficient connections, making cycling a more attractive option for everyday commuting.

The most notable of the seven planned cycle highways was the 'Radschnellweg Ruhr' – an initiative launched as early as 2010. The project was named the 'Radschnellweg Ruhr' in reference to the well-known 'Ruhrschnellweg' – a major highway built in the 1960s that runs through the Ruhr area from west to east. This name helped attract significant media attention. However, like many other planned cycle expressways, the realization of the 'Radschnellweg Ruhr' faced considerable delays. Despite the state government's vision of integrating these routes as a key component of the local transport transition, local authorities were slow to implement them.

This presentation seeks to analyze why this crucial element of North Rhine-Westphalia's transportation transition is being implemented so slowly, despite growing traffic and environmental concerns. The argument put forward is that the expansion of cycle paths is being hindered by administrative barriers originally introduced in the 1970s and 1980s to curb the unchecked expansion of road traffic. Since the ambitious construction of cycle highways presents similar planning and infrastructural challenges as road construction, it has encountered the same conflicts – such as disputes over the loss of green spaces, parking availability, and lengthy planning and public participation processes. Financing issues have compounded these delays, further obstructing the realization of this key component of sustainable urban mobility.

Bio:

Christian Franke is an associate professor of economic history at the University of Siegen (Germany). He has published widely on the history of transport policy, standardisation

*Speaker

and infrastructure. He currently publishes a 'Short History of Mobility in North Rhine-Westphalia'.

Keywords: Cycle Highways, North Rhine, Westphalia

E-cargo bikes and suburbs – a geographical and cultural fit?

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Abstract

The Elevate project selected a specific set of geographies for our e-cargo bike trials, focusing on suburbs of the three UK project cities: Leeds, Brighton and Oxford. Suburbia, or rather the "rural urban fringe" (Philips et al. 2022: 11) has the highest technical potential for carbon savings from car substitution, but suburbs are very different things in different contexts. Our chosen 'suburbs' represent rural satellite towns (Leeds), peri-urban flat-dwelling in a hilly area (Brighton), and more traditional dispersed commuterville around a congested historical centre (Oxford). In this paper we explore how the uses of the e-cargo bikes (for 1-7 months) by our self-selecting sample of keen experimenters (n=49 households) might reflect these differences in place: in the senses of geographies, domestic architectures, and suburban cultures. Is there an optimum use case for suburban adoption of ECBs? Are there a collection of suburban social practices that together offer the best fit with what the ECB can offer? Does the image of the ECB as a messenger/indicator/tool of 'gentrification' (Boterman 2020; Glachant and Behrendt 2024) play out in our case study cities? Attention to place and culture offers the opportunity to target new e-micromobility modes to appropriate constituencies in furthering transport transitions.

Keywords: E-micromobility, cargo bike, geography, suburbs

*Speaker

Increasing cycling by improving access to cycles

Sally Cairns*¹

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Abstract

This paper will explore the way in which improving access to cycles could lead to an increase in cycling. In particular, it will summarise the evidence obtained from a literature review and series of workshops to address the questions:

- **Does simply increasing access to cycles increase cycling?**
- **Is affordability a ‘real’ barrier** to (optimal) cycle ownership?
- **Are financial incentives effective** in encouraging people to cycle more?
- **Does the chance to ‘try before you buy’ alter perceptions of value for money** and subsequent purchasing of cycles?
- **Are leasing schemes popular** and financially viable – and what are the pros and cons of promoting them compared to personal ownership?
- **What is the scope for increasing bike share schemes** – and how do such schemes interact with personal ownership?
- **What are the policy priorities** for local and central Government?

It is derived from work completed as part of the ELEVATE project, a UK research-council funded project (grant UKRI EP/S030700/1), looking at the viability of micromobility options such as e-bikes and e-cargo bikes to reduce car use and encourage more sustainable travel habits. Work has included (or will include): local and national surveys, a series of e-cargo bike trials in the cities of Brighton, Leeds and Oxford and a series of workshops with stakeholders. A recurring theme from these activities, and many other studies, is that people would choose to cycle but costs are a key barrier to e-cycle ownership and use. Meanwhile, there are a wide variety of proposed solutions, from tax breaks, to grants, to rental or leasing schemes, which aim to overcome this barrier. This paper will aim to provide a brief overview of the problem and potential solutions.

Keywords: Cycling, Cycles, Affordability, Financial Incentives: Ebikes, Pedelects, Leasing, Try before you buy

*Speaker

Bicycle as a mobility option? – Exploring (in-)equitable distribution of cycling infrastructure in rural areas

Caroline Huth^{*1}

¹Technical University of Applied Sciences Wildau – Germany

Abstract

Accessibility problems increase with decreasing settlement density and therefore particularly affect rural areas. Compared to urban areas, the mobility opportunities are sometimes limited due to a lack of options. Studies show that the availability of cycling infrastructure influence the usability of the bicycle. But cycling infrastructure is not equally distributed and the bicycle is therefore not available as an easily accessible mobility option in all areas. This challenge is playing an increasingly role in research approaches to equity in the mobility sector with focus on urban areas. The distribution of cycling infrastructure in rural regions has been largely ignored and has not yet been placed in the context of equitable mobility planning.

Therefore, the research question of this study is: To what extent is the distribution of the cycling infrastructure network in rural areas equitable? The accessibility levels of socio-economically and spatially (dis-)advantaged areas are taken into account. Using the example of rural regions in Germany, the study examines i) how an equitable distribution can be measured and ii) in which areas is the bicycle (not) a mobility option.

By linking travel time and the number of accessible destinations, an index is created that systematically maps the differences in the accessibility of everyday destinations by bicycle. For this purpose, routing software (GraphHopper) is used to calculate travel times (isochrones) to points of interest (POIs) based on various starting points (100x100m grids). In a second step, the results will be blended with spatial structural and socio-economic data in order to describe disadvantaged areas.

The results of the study are both the method for measuring the equitable distribution of cycling infrastructure and the results of further spatial analyses. The findings can serve as a basis for future planning strategies to promote mobility equity and the expansion of cycling infrastructure in rural areas.

Caroline Huth is a doctoral researcher at *Technical University of Applied Sciences Wildau (TH Wildau)* at the professorship for Cycling Transport. Her PhD thesis expresses the extent to which spatial inequalities manifest themselves in cycling-based accessibility and availability of cycling infrastructure and which dynamics influence them in planning processes. She studied *Geography (B.Sc.)* at *Universität Bonn* and *Spatial Planning (M.Sc.)* at *Technical University of Dortmund*.

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^{*}Speaker

Keywords: cycling infrastructure, rural areas, distributive justice, mobility justice, accessibility
poverty

Enhancing the Attractiveness of Public Transport via Socio-Cultural Drivers: Case Studies from Selected Chinese Cities

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¹ Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia – Russia

² Peter the Great St. Petersburg Polytechnic University – Russia

³ Chongqing Jiaochuang Bolian Transportation Technology Co., Ltd. – China

⁴ Chongqing Jiaotong University – China

Abstract

Abstract:

As the rising concerns over climate change and urban congestion, promoting public transport as an alternative to private car use has become a global priority. But conventional transport policies often fail to engage with citizens' everyday perceptions and affective experiences. This paper introduces the concept of *affective alternatives*, examining how Chinese cities employ socio-cultural incentives-such as themed trams and metro stations, green mileage reward schemes, festival giveaways, and popular culture IP collaborations-to reframe public transport as a culturally engaging and emotionally resonant mobility choice.

Drawing on case studies from Shanghai, Chengdu, Xi'an and other cities, the study reveals how these "soft interventions" enhance user experience while fostering locally grounded mobility cultures. It further analyzes how such practices supplement formal policy by cultivating emotional attachment, civic participation, and willingness to choose sustainable transport. The paper aims to enrich the cultural dimension of the "Mobility Alternatives" framework and offers insights into building more inclusive and emotionally attuned transport systems.

Brief Biography:

Zhang Jiaman. I am a social activist from China, holds a bachelor's degree from Hubei Normal University and is currently pursuing a master's degree at Herzen State Pedagogical University in Russia. My research focuses on the intersection of education and transport humanities. I manage several social media platforms dedicated to transport culture in China and has gained notable influence in this field.

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Keywords: transportation culture, Humanities, soft interventions

^{*}Speaker

Unpacking the Ideas and Ideals of Bus Enthusiasm: Challenging the Professional-Amateur Divide

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Abstract

This paper seeks to discuss the role of enthusiasm in the creative entrepreneurship of transport. Planners and experts within institutional bodies are unequivocally and unquestioningly seen as ‘the professionals’ in transport nowadays. Transport planning is also an established academic discipline developed since the 1950s. Yet a largely missing notion in the studies of transport is that of ‘enthusiasm’, even though the attractions of transport have historically attracted a good number of enthusiasts. Transport enthusiasm itself has seldom been studied, and even if so, it could easily fall into discussions as hobbyists, or with affiliations to being ‘amateurs’, as not fitting with professional standards. The amateur is defined as ‘the person who loves’ (Stiegler, 2017). It is also traditionally defined as a dabbler, yet it has been argued beyond that to be rule-defying and producing value through non-rationalised work. This paper rethinks and challenges the traditional professional-amateur divide by discussing a case study obtained from a series of key informant interviews with a practitioner who worked in all walks of the bus industry, and ended up establishing his own bus company in Hong Kong as a pursuit of his lifelong bus enthusiasm since childhood. In response to the call for more comparative perspectives and studying the global east, this paper analyses the case of Hong Kong buses through the transformative contribution of this British bus enthusiast, who later became an entrepreneur in the bus business. It shows precisely how bus enthusiasm is channelled into what he termed ‘busman intuition’, contrasting with existing professional sets of parameters and methods. It also argues how bus routes are a product of creation like that of a novel or film, with the ideas coming from experience and childhood re-enactment. The notion of ‘craft production’ (Campbell, 2005), of investing the personality of self is also discussed.

Keywords: bus, enthusiasm, amateur, professional, entrepreneurship

*Speaker

Towards cultures of sustainable mobilities

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Abstract

Abstract:

The paper offers the framework of the cultures of sustainable mobility, understood as a way to unite, on one hand, the primarily technical discourses concerning the shift to sustainable mobilities and, on the other hand, the mobility cultures embedded in the ways of doing and the ways of talking, that is in discourses, practices, encounters, and broader ways of life. The paper presents an argument for adopting a cultural perspective on how sustainable mobilities are practised and discussed. It draws on the mobility literature, highlighting both narrower cultural dimensions and broader perspectives on cultures, where cultures refer to ways of behaving. Specifically, the cultures of sustainable mobility serve as a framework that raises, among other critical questions, which mode of mobility and how is valued; how people discuss mobilities and how this affects the meaning of transport modes; and how different ways of being mobile in practice relate to practising sustainability, in both conscious and unplanned manners. The paper presents multiple examples of sustainable mobilities and explores the unexpected and accidental forms of sustainability, drawing particularly on the Soviet urban transport system. Thus, the paper highlights histories and how they can provide unexpected connections. It also emphasises words, narratives, and cultural frameworks for thinking about mobilities. The paper draws insights and provides examples in the form of vignettes from previous research projects, including those on socialist (auto-)mobility cultures, walking and traffic discourses, and public transport as a public space.

Short biography:

Tauri Tuvikene is a professor of urban studies at the School of Humanities, Tallinn University. He works on comparative urbanism, post-socialist cities, the study of urban mobility practices and regulations, and the politics of (sustainable) urban infrastructures. On these topics, he has published in *Urban Studies*, *IJURR*, *Journal of Transport Geography*, etc. He has co-edited two books: "Post-Socialist Urban Infrastructures" (Routledge) and "If Cars Could Walk: Postsocialist Streets in Transformation" (Berghahn) and led major research projects "Public Transport as Public Space in European Cities: Narrating, Experiencing, Contesting" and "Capacities for Resilient and Inclusive Urban Public Transport Infrastructure and Built Environment".

Keywords: sustainability, car culture, mobilities, public transport

*Speaker

Kinetic Elite and Hypermobility in Brazil

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This paper presents a critical analysis of urban mobility in Brazil through the twin concepts of hypermobility and the kinetic elite. It begins by examining their social representation in the media, where they challenge traditional paradigms of mobility, and by analyzing concrete examples of their manifestation in the country. Cultural productions such as *Blade Runner* (1982/2017), *Succession* (2018), the telenovela *Vale Tudo* (1988/2025) and the reality series *Mulheres Ricas* (2012) illustrate how certain individuals operate at the margins of the urban system through individualization, hyperspeed and exclusivity, embodying an anti-systemic stance. The study argues that urban mobility is fundamentally systemic (Bertalanffy, 2020), arising from the mutual interaction of transportation, traffic and land-use systems (Morin, 2003). Consequently, the transgression posed by this alternative form of mobility challenges established practices and norms, reshaping the urban mobility dynamic.

Through a qualitative methodology, the study investigates the territorial, political-administrative and economic relationships that influence mobility in Brazil. By integrating theoretical frameworks, case studies and empirical evidence, it deepens understanding of how the kinetic elite—defined as the mobility ideal that seeks to escape established systems—operates in direct opposition to principles of justice, equity and inclusion (Nyamai & Schramm, 2022), a phenomenon rendered more acute by Brazil's pronounced social inequality.

An analysis of cases such as Hotel Fasano Boavista (SP), Catarina Executive Airport (SP) and Transamérica Comandatuba (BA) reveals how this elite develops proprietary infrastructures—helipads, private airports and inaccessible luxury resorts—aligned with Santos's (2002) concept of "fast time." The findings indicate that hypermobility among Brazil's kinetic elites produces a doubly perverse effect: it intensifies social inequalities and distorts the foundational ideals of urban mobility.

Living Without a Driver's License: Between Social Pressure and Distinction Within the Car-Norm System

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Cedex, France

Abstract

In a context where car use remains the dominant mode of transport, not holding a driver's license can be perceived as a deviation from the norm (Sattlegger & Rau, 2016). As part of a broader reflection on alternatives to private car mobility, this presentation explores how the absence of a driver's license is experienced by individuals, particularly through their interactions with others and within different social contexts. We aim to shed light on the range of social perceptions faced by people without a license. These perceptions vary according to the different spheres persons navigate-family, friends, work environments, employment support organization-and shape how they themselves interpret the significance of not having a license. Our analysis is structured around two main axes. First, individuals are not exposed to the same social expectations depending on their socio-demographic characteristics. Encounters with social pressures to conform to the "driving norm," or on the contrary, the

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valorization of alternative mobility practices, vary according to biographical trajectories and evolve across the life course. Second, these same characteristics influence the way individuals without a license perceive their own situation. We examine how narratives reveal processes of internalization or distancing from the automobile norm. We are conducting a qualitative study based on interviews with persons who do not hold a driver's license -whether they have never attempted the test, failed it, lost it, or hold a foreign license not recognized in France. We intentionally diversify the sample by socio-demographic profiles. In the first part of the interview, participants map their regular travel patterns using a spatial reconstruction game (Ramadier & Bronner, 2006). In a second, biographical part, they narrate how their mobility practices have evolved over time. The study is conducted in two French regions-Île-de-France and Grand Est-capturing a diversity of residential settings, from dense urban areas to rural spaces and small intermediary towns. Preliminary results show that participants construct their discourse through a lens of deviance: while some perceive the absence of a license as a marginal or atypical trajectory, others present it as a valued distancing from mobility norms.

Keywords: Without a driver's license, Car, Norm System, biographical approach, perceptions

Mobility Styles within New Class Society

Sören Groth^{*†1}, Dirk Wittowsky², and Fabia Scharf^{*2}

¹ILS – Institute for Regional and Urban Development – Germany

²University Duisburg-Essen – Germany

Abstract

Abstract

Recent social structure analyses have increasingly pointed to a ‘return of social classes’ in countries of the Global North (e.g.,Eribon 2015; Latour/Schultz 2022; Nachtwey 2018). This development involves new experiences of contingency in the context of an antagonistic clash between hegemonies and counter-hegemonic alternatives (e.g.,Marchart 2007). These antagonisms also affect the field of everyday mobilities. They suggest that a sustainable transformation of mobilities is culturally contested and does not follow a linear process, as, e.g. theories of reflexive modernisation would suggest (e.g.,Beck 1986). This article takes this assumption and applies it to the discussion about a possible transformation from a car-based towards a multimodal society (e.g.,Geels 2012).

Theoretically, this contribution draws on the model of the ‘three-class society’ prominently proposed by Reckwitz (2022). His theoretical considerations are empirically incorporated into a standardised survey of 1,200 young adults in Germany. On this basis, the three classes are examined in relation to the concept of ‘mobility styles’ (e.g.,Prillwitz/Barr 2011). This approach is based on the assumption that new class formations produce heterogeneous mobility styles.

The study shows that efforts to bring about a socio-ecological transformation of everyday mobilities and the associated alternative multimodal mobility practices can be interpreted primarily as practices of a new (progressive) middle class. However, this is resisted by (conservative) counter-mobilities from an old (traditional) middle class that defends car-oriented cultural practices. Beyond the cultural struggles for interpretive authority in the field of everyday mobilities, a new (precarious) underclass is emerging that is characterised by a new form of mobility poverty. Nonetheless, the analysis of mobility styles reveal that there are no linear trends towards an socio-ecological mobility transformation within the new (progressive) middle class. This is due to the fact that this social class also produces heterogeneous mobility styles that counteract such transformation processes.

Brief Biography

Dr Sören Groth is mobility researcher at the ILS – Institute for Regional and Urban Development in Dortmund. He previously completed his PhD at the Institute of Human-Geography at Goethe-University Frankfurt and studied Urban Planning at HafenCity University Hamburg.

^{*}Speaker

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Prof. Dirk Wittowsky heads the Institute for Mobility and Urban Planning (imobis) at the University of Duisburg-Essen (UDE). He previously headed the Mobility and Space Research Group at ILS in Dortmund and held a management position at Deutsche Bahn. Fabia Scharf, M.Sc., is a PhD candidate at imobis/UDE. She previously studied Urban Planning at the Technical University of Dortmund.

Keywords: Social class, mobility styles, mode related emotions, mobility practices

From net-zero to low energy: rethinking electromobility and social equality

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Abstract

The long history of the automotive industry towards mass manufacturing and of automobility towards mass car ownership and use has culminated in myriad social and ecological disasters. The central organizing principles of economies of scale in manufacturing and of private ownership in use has generated a super-abundance of cars within our societies. In this dystopian present the trajectory of electromobility is fatally flawed by the mantra of net-zero applied to Baroque vehicle designs that derive from and extend practices from an era of cheap fuel and emissions profligacy. The resulting ‘electromobilityscape’ is characterized by vehicles and practices that are at least potentially net-zero in terms of carbon emissions, but also high energy, high cost, and likely to create an underclass of the mobility poor that are excluded from full participation in society via the conjoining of (charging) infrastructures and vehicles into a privileged domain.

We conclude therefore that governance structures created around net-zero, alongside a leniency and permissiveness regarding the incremental insertion of resource-intensive and elite automobilities have enabled this emergent dysfunctionality. We propose an alternative foundation for the electromobilityscape grounded in the prioritization of low energy consumption rather than net-zero as a societal ambition. As a utopian vision, we anticipate small scale circular manufacturing, producing low energy, low weight and low speed vehicles, and the progressive exclusion of resource-intensive mobility choices.

Bio

Peter Wells is a Professor of Business and Sustainability, and Director of the Centre for Automotive Industry Research at Cardiff Business School. His most recent contributions include co-editing *Business Models for Sustainability Transitions – How Organisations Contribute to Societal Transformation* (2021) and editing *Contemporary Operations and Logistics: Achieving excellence in turbulent times* (2019). He is also author of *How the global automotive industry stole our sustainable mobility future: grand theft auto* (2025). He regularly appears on the media as a commentator and analyst on the contemporary automotive industry.

Keywords: Path dependency, net zero, elite automobility, dystopia

*Speaker

Cyclecars, Bubble Cars, and Quadricycles: A Century of Alternative Motoring

“Millions of Europeans want to buy affordable European cars. So we should also invest in small, affordable vehicles. This is why we will propose to work with industry on a new Small Affordable Cars initiative,” said Ursula Von Der Leyen, President of the European Commission, in her State of the Union address on 12 September 2025 (Von Der Leyen, 2025).

The Small Affordable Cars initiative has been floated by John Elkann, chairman of Stellantis, who at a recent conference “called for a new regulatory framework to facilitate the production of affordable small cars [in Europe] like Japan's Kei cars” (Urquart, 2025). Elkann is trying to reinvigorate A-segment city cars, where “sales have plummeted from a peak of 1.6 million units in 2009 to just 393,000 in 2024” (Urquart, 2025).

These recent events are offering a new twist on a familiar story. Over the course of the history of the automobile, there have always been attempts at cheap, affordable cars. As this essay will show, this has been a cyclical occurrence: simple, cheap vehicles appear and become popular; then a more sophisticated, attractively priced light car takes over the market. Today we are seeing the familiar story going backward: as part of a push toward a more sustainable planet, a transition to sustainable mobility is underway. And small three- or four-wheeled vehicles that can be driven with a motorcycle license are leading the charge. These are called quadricycles, low-speed electric vehicles, micromobility devices, neighborhood electric vehicles, *voitures sans permis*,¹ and so on. Now major car manufacturers, some of which are already present in this category, would like to develop a light car — this time not to take over, but to complement the microcar² segment. This essay will look at the subsequent generations of these microcars with an emphasis on how legislation altered the landscape.

¹ Vehicles that can be driven without valid driving permits

² This term has been around longer than the others, so it was deemed safer to use.

³ *Petite Voiture* is French for Small Car.

⁴ Patented Automobile

Reframing Rome's Tramways: Historical Continuities, Sustainable Planning and the Politics of Alternative Mobility

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²Università degli studi di Torino = University of Turin – Italy

Abstract

This paper investigates the historical evolution and contemporary renaissance of Rome's tramway system as a case through which to examine the tensions and possibilities of alternative mobility paradigms in car-dominated urban contexts. By tracing the development of the tram network from the late nineteenth century to the current mobility strategies – particularly the Piano Urbano della Mobilità Sostenibile (PUMS) and the proposed Tramvia Togliatti – the study addresses the complex interplay between infrastructural transformation, urban imaginaries, and political agendas.

Rather than framing tramways as mere substitutes for automobiles or metro systems, the paper explores their function as spatially embedded and socially meaningful infrastructures that challenge mono-modal mobility planning. From a historically informed perspective, Rome's tramways are situated within broader Italian and European trajectories, highlighting how mobility cultures, planning rationales, and transport imaginaries have shifted.

The analysis foregrounds how the contraction of the tram network in the twentieth century and its recent planned revitalisation have given rise to distinctive cultures of use and expectation. Drawing on autoethnographic immersion and discourse analysis, the paper reflects on how tramways are simultaneously perceived and presented as relics of the past and as vectors of urban innovation. This dual temporal identity is examined in relation to the atmospheres of urban travel, understood as shaped by lived experience and top-down urban governance.

Finally, the paper argues for a conceptual and policy-oriented reframing of public transport systems – not solely as service infrastructures but as socio-technical assemblages capable of reconfiguring spatial justice, urban form, and everyday mobilities. In doing so, it contributes to current debates on the epistemological and political status of mobility alternatives and a broader reconsideration of automobility as the dominant paradigm in urban transport planning.

Federico La Bruna (He/Him/They/Their) is a PhD Candidate in Sociology and Methodology of Social Research (SOMET), Ph.D. program of the NASP doctoral school (University of Milano and University of Torino). His research interests are in urban mobilities, digital dynamics and social atmospheres. He recently co-authored "Atmospheres of Degradation. Visibility and Rhythms in Milan's Public Transport" (La Bruna F. & Brazioli C., 2024), published by *Etnografia e Ricerca Qualitativa*.

*Speaker

Keywords: Urban imaginaries, Sociotechnical assemblages, Infrastructure politics, Mobility justice

From Decline to Revival: The Prospect of the Light Rail Transformation of Saint Petersburg Tram

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³Chongqing Jiaotong University – China

Abstract

Abstract:

This paper investigates the decline and revival of Saint Petersburg's tramway system in the context of global discussions on Mobility Alternatives.

In the late 20th century, widespread dismantlement of inner-city tram lines-driven by pro-automobile policies-led to a significant loss in public transport capacity, marginalization of transit-dependent communities, and rising congestion. In particular, the demolition of the cross-river line in the urban area has formed a "black hole in the city center".

This paper focusing on recent light rail developments, such as the "Chizhik" LRT and the Kupchino-Shushary PPP corridor, the study explores how tram system modernization-through dedicated tracks, vehicle upgrades, and multimodal integration-has begun to reestablish trams as a viable mobility backbone. It further argues for the future restoration of historically dismantled routes as a promising alternative in urban corridors facing spatial constraints and rising travel demand, especially when the city's insufficient budget has led to the slow construction of the subway and the inability to meet the travel needs of citizens. Reclaiming former rights-of-way could offer equitable, low-carbon transport while reshaping the narrative around trams from obsolete relics to modern solutions. By analyzing shifts in transport governance, infrastructural regimes, and public mobility cultures, the paper offers critical insights into post-socialist urban mobility transitions and their contribution to sustainable, inclusive transport futures.

Brief Biography:

Huang Zixiao holds a bachelor's degree from Chongqing Jiaotong University and is currently pursuing a master's degree at Peter the Great St. Petersburg Polytechnic University. Research focuses on transport culture and heritage. Is one of the author of *The Fushun Electric Railway* and is famous among Chinese transport history community.

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Keywords: railway heritage, Russia, tram

Mobility Alternatives and Mobility Mismatches: New Perspectives for Understanding How Cycling Practices Evolved in Minneapolis, Rotterdam, and Johannesburg

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Abstract

Cities around the world strive to shift trips from less sustainable modes to sustainable ones, like cycling. In so doing, they focus primarily on top-down policies and infrastructure as levers to shift trips. Why did people cycle in the past? What do their cycling practices say about the larger mobility system and their mobility alternatives? This paper uses the *Cycling Cities* research framework to center mobility alternatives and mobility mismatches as new perspectives for understanding histories of cycling in Minneapolis, Rotterdam, and Johannesburg. Individual practices developed in response to mismatches between systems and people's real needs, over time forming distinct social meanings. I argue that this pattern shaped the development of cycling in each city, and should inform planning and policymaking today.

In all three cities, people cycled in response to mismatches within shifting mobility system hierarchies. In the early twentieth century, walking and public transit sat atop these hierarchies. Bicycles enabled Minneapolis tradesmen to navigate streets, Rotterdam workers to overcome expensive transit, and black Johannesburgers to contest racial segregation. As hierarchies shifted, so did the mismatches, cycling practices, and the people who cycled. Policy and infrastructure based around separation reflected a reorganized hierarchy with cars at the top, supplanting and marginalizing walking, public transit, and cycling.

Cycling reflected not only mismatches, but also social and class groups. Only in Rotterdam did cycling become common as middle-class daily mobility, but even there, advocates and policymakers shifted their approach to elevate cycling in a new hierarchy built around driving. Policymakers and scholars wanting to increase cycling would do well to understand why people did and did not choose cycling in the past, and how the available alternatives broadened and narrowed cycling's place within mobility systems. This paper advocates a rethinking of how we prioritize cycling based on historical comparison. It proposes that mobility mismatches and alternatives shaped the evolution of cycling practices.

Keywords: cycling, history, mobility, comparison

*Speaker

Mobility with a pulse: Thinking with aesthetics for radical mobilities.

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Abstract

Contribution as part of the debate session led by Noel Cass and Katharina Manderscheid:
"An alternative mobilities paradigm? Rethinking mobility and mobilities research in times of poly-crisis."

Keywords: Radical mobility, human energy, aesthetics

*Speaker

Resistance in programmed spaces?

Dalia Mukhtar-Landgren^{*1}

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Abstract

This reflection focuses on questions related to resistance, hermeneutical sensitivity and research ethics by setting formal, top-down ('programmed') spaces for change center-stage. European transport research is increasingly entangled in a multilevel transport innovation complex shaped by EU funding, a system often embedded in depoliticized narratives of innovation in mobility futures and with a tendency to prioritize innovations over the experience of urban planners or the lived experiences of inhabitants. In these programmed spaces, such as Urban Living Labs or 'smart mobility' testbeds and pilots, participatory ambitions are increasingly set in pre-defined organizational quick-fixes or even "toolboxes". At the same time, we are witnessing the parallel dismantling of civil society funding and infrastructures in many counties. While spaces for critique are being programmed and circumscribed in relation to civil society organizations, public sector organizations and academia, this reflection raises and discusses tensions between resistance and change in collaborative research practices. Can these programmed participatory spaces hold radical potential at all, or are they constrained by institutional configurations and pathdependencies that limits any emancipatory outcomes? To explore this, I engage with discussions on bureaucratic resistance in public administration theory, using concepts like Hester Eisenstein's "Femocrats" (feminists within bureaucratic structures) and Rosemary O'Leary's "guerrilla bureaucracies" as lenses through which to examine the potential for change and resistance together and within collaborative urban spaces.

Keywords: Experimentation, Resistance, Planning

^{*}Speaker

Staying with the trouble: Rethinking mobility and mobilities research in times of poly-crisis

Katharina Manderscheid*¹

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Abstract

Scholars working on socio-ecological transitions, including in mobilities, have anticipated that these transitions would face resistance within industries, politicians and elites. This resistance was thought and hoped to be the last struggles of a dying system, defeated by the unavoidable logics of a technoscientific climate politics. Current events reveal instead a powerful regressive renaissance of masculinist and military-industrial fossil regime. Politics is turning to anti-science and anti-progress portrayed as anti-elitism and anti-wokeism. Scientific and academic freedoms are under attack. Right-wing populist parties exploit these moves. In our planned debate, we want to reflect on what it means to do mobilities research in such times of regression. With the term regression we mean, following Rahel Jaeggi (2022: 523), "not a linear relapse behind an achieved state; rather, regressions are, (...) complex processes of unlearning. They undercut enrichment and experiential processes and render them impossible." We want to discuss whether and how mobilities research can contribute to a resistance against these regressions and also to defending academic freedom. Furthermore, we want to ask whether we need to rethink our own paradigm, especially the understanding of mobilities, to avoid involuntary support of regressive fossil policies, as well as rethinking how to avoid accusations of elitism in asserting the urgency of climate technoscience

Keywords: socio, ecological transition, autonomobilities, regressive renaissance, mobilities paradigm, radical mobilities

*Speaker

Listening to the losers: Amplifying the voices of those who need and want alternatives to the automobile status quo

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Abstract

The system of automobility represents both the idea that everybody always has access to a private car, and that everybody always needs and wants to have access to a private car. Thereby, the system of automobility neglects the mobility needs of those who cannot afford a car or housing in central areas, of those with handicaps that prevent them from driving, including the elderly, and of those who are too young to drive. It also neglects the mobility aspirations of the increasingly large share of urban households who live car-free by choice and desire cities that cater to their needs of walkable, cyclable and attractive multi-purpose public spaces. However, both research and policymaking tend to focus on finding alternatives for those who currently benefit from and cherish the automobile system – mainly middle- and upper-class men. The experiences and aspirations of those whose mobility needs are impeded or not or only partly met by the system of automobility get comparatively less attention. I argue that a renewed interest in the experiences and aspirations of those whose mobility needs are partly or not at all met by the automobile status quo harbours the potential to create imaginaries for the future of mobility that radically break with the unfulfilled and unsustainable promises of automobility – namely the idea of realising individual freedom through hyperflexibility and hypermobility. Far from being idealistic, such imaginaries of post-car futures would be tied to people's current realities. They would focus on making the lives of those easier who already today travel over shorter distances, less frequently and mainly without a car. Such imaginaries carry the promise to link environmental sustainability with social justice, by ensuring that a lack of or restricted access to car-based mobility no longer results in social exclusion, deprivation and losses in quality of life.

Keywords: mobility justice, automobility, sustainable transport, post, car futures

*Speaker

Speculative Mobility: Exploring the Future of the 15-Minute City through Science Fiction Movies and Series

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Abstract

The 15-minute city (15mC) has emerged as a prominent planning vision aimed at fostering sustainable, resilient, and inclusive urban environments through proximity-based living. While its principles align with broader climate and livability goals, realizing this vision involves complex transitions in mobility systems, urban design, and social practices-transitions that are dependent on local contexts, cultures, and values. This involves breaking the dominance of cars especially in urban mobility and sustainable and healthy alternatives such as walking and cycling. As transport planning increasingly adopts future-oriented approaches, the role of imagination, narratives, and culture in shaping mobility visions is gaining recognition. These visions are often shaped by popular culture, such as movies and TV series and their depictions of dominant ways of moving around and accessing essential activities and services.

This research investigates how futures of mobility are represented in globally produced science fiction films and television series, and what their cultural narratives can reveal about public imaginaries of urban life. Using multimodal discourse analysis, we examine how proximity, movement, and urban space are portrayed across the different contents, and how these representations reflect or diverge from dominant policy discourses around the 15mC. Science fiction has long been recognized as a site of "sociotechnical imagination", offering alternative visions that challenge or reinforce present-day assumptions about mobility, equity, and spatial organization. By analysing these often utopian or dystopian narratives, we aim to understand how cultural and geographic contexts shape the depiction of mobility futures, and how more inclusive depictions of the future in science fiction could influence mobility cultures and lead to more inclusive future visions. Our research aims to contribute to recent calls for integrating critical, creative, and culturally grounded approaches into urban and transport futures research. Our analyses suggest that popular media can offer meaningful insight into how people imagine and relate to future cities and transport systems-insights that could enrich planning processes by opening space for more diverse and creative perspectives.

Keywords: Science fiction media, 15 minute city, urban mobility imaginaries, mobility futures

^{*}Speaker

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Reading the mobilities of diaspora: Urban mobility practices and diasporic translocality in African literatures

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Abstract

Mobility has become a popular term in the study of postcolonial and diasporic literatures, where it is frequently used as a synonym for macro-scale global movements such as diaspora, exile, and migration. In such uses, the metaphorical meanings of mobility gain priority over its tangible aspects, and the focus shifts to the outcomes of mobility instead of mobility itself (Toivanen 2021, 1-2). This paper adopts an alternative perspective to the mobilities of African diasporic formations by focusing on the relationship between the diasporic condition and tangible mobilities (see also Kleist 2019). In order to take the mobilities of African diasporic literatures "seriously" (see Mavhunga et al. 2016, 44), my reading concentrates on portrayals of urban mobilities in Felwine Sarr's travel chronicle *La Saveur des derniers mètres* (2021), Edem Awumey's Paris-centered migration novel *Les Pieds sales* (2009), Simon Njami's Afro-European crime novel *Cercueil & Cie* (1985), and two diasporic return narratives, Daniel Biyaoula's *L'Impasse* (1996) and Nimrod's *L'Or des rivières* (2010). Taking as its starting point the idea that urban spaces are products of people's mobilities (Murray and Upstone 2014, 193) and sites where local and transnational elements intertwine (Quayson 2014, 4), my reading explores the embodied aspects of diasporic subjects' experiences of moving around in cities. The fact that these local everyday urban mobilities are set against the backdrop of wider global displacements is foregrounded in the texts: their portrayals of urban mobilities establish connections between micro- and macro-scale mobilities, linking local urban spatialities to distant locations that form the fabric of diasporic existence. Portrayals of mobility practices not only serve the narrative function of moving the characters around in urban spaces but are also key in creating translocal connections (Mattheis 2021, 1) typical of the diasporic condition.

Keywords: diaspora, African literature, translocality, urban mobilities

^{*}Speaker

Sonic Narratives as Alternative Mobilities

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Abstract

Abstract

This paper explores sonic narratives in connection with soundwalking and mobile media, discussing emotional engagement and wellbeing impact from navigating and listening to locative soundscapes. It also presents perspectives on soundscape participation through ‘sonic bleed’, addressing immersive engagement with the site through the combined roles of content creator, sound-maker, and listener.

Walking is a commonly explored method within both mobile media and sound studies, with soundwalking being a regular practice for listening and field recording. Foreman states “one of the ways in which to question this link between an embodied sense of place and sound is to consider the role of the soundwalker in remembrance” (2014: 2-3). Soundwalking is a way of recollecting and reflecting on past interactions with a site, an often therapeutic and enriching process.

Mobile sonic narratives encourage an alternative way of moving through urban and rural landscapes, enhancing listener wellbeing while walking. This can be achieved not just through the exercise of navigating and listening, but also through creating a meaningful journey. Keltner and Haidt (2003: 310) discuss the meaningful experience of awe in response to human art, artefacts, and vast natural or man-made structures, expressing awe-inducing events as “one of the fastest and most powerful methods of personal change and growth”. As part of inspiring awe, deeper connections can be made through the interweaving and bleeding of composed audio narratives alongside aesthetic and sonic intricacies of the site.

The paper draws on my doctoral findings and further research developing heritage-specific mobile immersive audio experiences from 2021-2023 in Brighton & Hove, UK. Data collected from observations, surveys, interviews and movement mapping during public listening events is expanded on to support these discussions. Interlinked with sound arts, field recording and mobility discourse, this paper highlights the emotional connection between sound and place through walking and immersive listening.

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*Speaker

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Biography

I am a sound artist, field recordist and researcher based in Brighton, UK. I am an EPSRC SEAHHA-CDT funded PhD candidate and a cross-disciplinary lecturer at University of Brighton. I am also a lecturer at ICMP London and a visiting lecturer at University of Law Business School. Building on my doctoral research, I founded Retroscape Audio, a bespoke audio experience design company. In both my academic work and professional practice, I dedicate my time to creating publicly accessible and engaging 3D immersive locative audio experiences for the heritage sector, which embrace the sonic intricacies of the site within the design.

Keywords: audio, locative, sonic, narratives, soundwalk, heritage, soundscapes, mobile, walking, awe

”I can’t adapt to this situation because I have a van full of tools. I can’t just get on a bike and take a cement mixer around.” Exploring ‘White Van Man’ in the context of sustainable transport debates

Justin Spinney*¹ and Hanbit Chang*²

¹Justin Spinney – United Kingdom

²Hanbit Chang – Netherlands

Abstract

‘White Van Man’ (WVM) as ‘they’ are known in the UK denotes the drivers of small goods vehicles (< 3.5t) made up largely of trades, parcel and goods delivery. Sustainable transport policy has tended to focus on cars or large goods vehicles and largely ignored the vans on our roads. This absence seems odd given how many vans there are: the number of vans on UK roads has doubled from 2.3 million in 1998 to 4.6 million in 2023, clocking up 57 billion vehicle miles in 2022 and making up 18% of all vehicle miles (RAC Foundation.org, 2025), and the fact the fleet is 96% diesel.

First there are mediated understandings foregrounded in the exclusionary and reductive title WVM. The WMV category hides a great deal of difference. Beyond and behind the media-invented term, who actually is WVM politically, socially, economically...? How has the term WVM itself shaped the place of the van in sustainability debates? Secondly, what does WMV do, where do they go, and how do they fit or not into concepts like the 15mC or Low Traffic Neighbourhoods? Much sustainable transport policy seems to suggest that as long as buses, shared vehicles and cycle lanes are implemented the problem is solved because there is now no reason to use a private vehicle, but does this logic hold when we are dealing with trades and delivery? How do LTNs and 15mC policies affect WVM, and should we have any sympathy for them? Are the solutions implemented accessible to them? Are they negatively or positively impacted? Thirdly, how does the digitalisation of mobility affect what they do and how they do it? How does this differ between trades, delivery etc? To what extent and upon which logics do van drivers in different professions use tacit knowledge to cope with and resist algorithmic tools and streamlining? Finally, what is the potential for electrification in the sector? Electric vans are available, but starting at around £50k they represent a significant investment with uptake amongst WVM very low. What economic and social factors (such as masculinity in trades and driving professions; mobility patterns) shape purchase decisions and use of electric vans?

This debate sessions seeks to explore how current sustainable transport agendas affect and ‘land’ with WVM; what the future looks like for small goods vehicles; and how we engage WVM in imagining a more sustainable one?

*Speaker

Keywords: Vans, culture, representation, sustainability, labour

Falling between the cracks: Examining the invisible electric mobility revolution in rural Eastern India

Nikita Das^{*1}

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Abstract

As climate change concerns intensify, especially in Global South countries like India, the discourse around energy transitions (and by extension electric mobility) promised a more equitable relationship with human and non-human natures. However, it perpetuates hegemonic capitalist accumulations by rendering the labour of marginalized communities as informal and invisible. This research sheds light on the livelihoods that have been afforded by an informal three-wheeler electric vehicle, that is the electric *rickshaw* which performs taxi services in India. Despite their growing prevalence, the livelihood of *e-rickshaw* driving remains largely invisible to the formal eye as they form a part of the unregulated (even alegal) electric mobility revolution underway in India. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in the rural Eastern Indian village of Srikhanda, this paper examines how dominant technology-centric narratives of decarbonization strategies have produced conflicting processes on the ground that appear to ‘other’ the *e-rickshaw*. The study situates the informal *e-rickshaw* economy within a historical continuum, tracing its colonial legacy – from hand-pulled to cycle *rickshaws* – while also underscoring its contemporary perception of a more dignified technological advancement. Yet, the *e-rickshaw* drivers remain precariously positioned as they continue to reproduce existent social disparities of class and caste to sustain their livelihoods. This research uses a decolonial lens on energy transition to challenge its current hegemonic narratives. It emphasizes that the energy transition and the electric mobility revolution must be re-theorized not just as a technological shift, but as a sociopolitical project – one that is deeply shaped by inequality and aspiration. The occurrences in Srikhanda demonstrate that those in this livelihood are forced to abstain from recognition as they do not conform with the currently regulated electric mobility regime. Thus, it underscores that electric mobility is not simply unfolding; it is being negotiated, resisted and coproduced by actors who remain excluded from official narratives.

Keywords: electric mobility, informal livelihoods, just transitions, rural India

^{*}Speaker

Contesting the Regime: Electric Rickshaws, Informality, and the Politics of Urban Mobility Transitions

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Abstract

This study explores electric rickshaws (ERs) in Delhi as a paradigmatic case of bottom-up mobility innovation (BUMI), offering insights into the complexities of sustainable urban transport transitions in the Global South. ERs provide affordable, flexible last-mile connectivity, particularly complementing the Delhi Metro system, one of the biggest metro system in the world. Yet, despite their critical role in urban mobility, ERs remain on the periphery of formal policy frameworks-excluded from electric vehicle (EV) policies, subjected to court bans, and vulnerable to regulatory exploitation.

Utilizing the Multi-Level Perspective (MLP) and bottom-up innovations, this research investigates the adaptive strategies ER ecosystem employ to navigate institutional barriers and efforts to acquire legitimacy. Drawing on qualitative data from stakeholders, policy documents, and media narratives, the study examines the tension between informal mobility practices and dominant regime structures. It further critiques the influence of Western-centric EV models that often frame ERs as backward or informal, thereby overlooking their sustainability potential.

By foregrounding ERs, the study contributes to the decolonization of mobility transition discourses, emphasizing the need to recognize and integrate bottom-up innovations into urban mobility planning. The Delhi ER case exemplifies how cities can harness context-specific solutions to reimagine more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable transport futures. This research thus calls for a paradigm shift in how mobility transitions are conceptualized-moving from top-down, technocentric models to pluralistic, frameworks frameworks that have scopes of diverse mobility realities.

Keywords: Electric rickshaws, Bottom, up innovation, Sustainable urban mobility, Multi, Level Perspective (MLP), Mobility transitions, Informal mobility, Decolonizing mobility

*Speaker

Sustainability alternative or sustainability's "other"? The contested role of electric three-wheelers in South Asian mobility transitions

Jonas Van Der Straeten^{*1}, Nikita Das^{*2}, Vikas Bagde^{*3}, and Annemiek Prins^{*3}

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Abstract

Light vehicles such as rickshaws, microcars or cargo bikes epitomize the dilemmas of a transition to sustainable transport. While being promoted as a form of urban micromobility and a sustainable alternative to automobility in Europe, the public perception of these vehicles is more ambiguous in many Asian and African countries. In South Asia, for example, with its long tradition of rickshaw transport, the often unregulated proliferation of electric rickshaws in recent years has caused public backlash. As research has shown, narratives of sustainability, modernity or civility are not seldomly mobilized *against* electric rickshaws in these contexts. In African countries such as Nigeria and Ghana, the rapid spread of motor tricycles has profoundly altered the urban transport landscape in recent years. These examples also demonstrate how deeply embedded mobility transitions involving light vehicles are in place-specific and historically grown mobility traditions, systems of meaning, and forms of governance. This session brings together researchers who explore and conceptualize the contested role of three wheelers in mobility transitions. We also use the case of three-wheeled mobility to discuss how to decolonize knowledge making in debates on mobility transitions and navigate the tensions between global hegemonic discourses and locally situated manifestations of sustainable transport. The presentations in this session will be designed as short discussion inputs to leave enough time for an in-depth discussion on these questions. Panelists will coordinate before the session and collaboratively determine a number of cross-cutting questions that can guide the discussion. We see this session as a potential kick-off for a joint publication project.

Keywords: South Asia, electric mobility, three, wheelers, informality

^{*}Speaker

Sustainable Work? Cycle-Rickshaw Labour as a Site of Change and Contestation

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Abstract

This paper takes the electrification of the cycle-rickshaw in Dhaka as a point of departure for exploring how pathways towards sustainable mobility intersect with questions of labour. Specifically, it examines how the advent of the electric rickshaw in Dhaka, Bangladesh, is reshaping both the embodied nature of rickshaw labour and the ways in which this form of mobility is politicized, contested, and appropriated. While the cycle-rickshaw has been closely associated with the embodied experience of working-class men, the electrification of this mode of transport is increasingly bringing in more diverse bodies and people, including elderly men, women, and workers with disabilities. This diversification of the work has not only created new opportunities for political claim-making – as evidenced by the framing of access to rickshaw licenses in terms of disability rights – but is also subtly transforming the grounds on which rickshaws are being restricted and banned from parts of Dhaka city. Crucially, by decoupling physical strength from rickshaw labour, electrification has undermined the longstanding perception of rickshaw pulling as an 'inhumane' and therefore unsustainable form of work that has no place in a modern urban future. While contestations over sustainable mobility are often analysed through the lens of lifestyle choices and consumption patterns, this paper argues for a deeper engagement with the labour that underpins these mobilities-and with the ways in which the embodied experience of work is politicized and incorporated and/or excluded from narratives on sustainability.

Keywords: Sustainable Mobility, Electric Mobility, South Asia, Labour and Embodiment, Urban Politics, Inclusion and Disability Right

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The Iron Cage of Modernity: Three Perspectives on the Hegemony of Automobility

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Abstract

With over 100 billion vehicle kilometres travelled annually, more than 19 million parking spaces, and the highest car density in Europe, the car plays a central role in the Dutch landscape. This dominance extends even further in many other West-European and Anglo-Saxon countries, where the car's cultural, social, and physical influence is even stronger. Where does this global hegemony of the car come from? In this contribution to the annual T2M conference, I explore the car's dominance through three perspectives, drawing on various explanations, paradigms, and worldviews.

The first perspective is instrumental: the car is seen primarily as a practical tool, adapting effortlessly to our sometimes unpredictable travel needs. In this view, we, as rational individuals, make our own choices and gravitate toward the car due to its convenience and utility. Here, the hegemony of the car is the aggregate of individual preferences and decisions.

The second perspective emphasizes the emotional and social aspects of car ownership. Desire for the car is not innate but constructed through social influence. The car serves as a symbol of upward mobility, social distinction, or conformity. It's more than just a means of transport—it becomes a marker of personal identity and societal status. The dominance of the car reflects the values and norms of society itself, where owning and driving a car can signify success, independence, and modernity.

The third perspective shifts focus to existing structures, often hierarchical in nature and power loaded. In this view, technology does not simply serve human needs; rather, human action is shaped and controlled by technology. The hegemony of the car becomes apparent in how it permeates our language (e.g., "alternative modes"), our built environment, and the interests of powerful industries (big oil, automotive, construction) and political-economy. In its most deterministic form, the individual is reduced to a passive spectator in this technological ecosystem.

The dominance of the car presents numerous societal challenges, from oil dependence to atomic individualism. Proposed solutions often align with one of three perspectives: for example, promoting road pricing (I), reducing fossil energy advertisements (II), or pushing for a fundamental shift away from car dependency (III). Beyond these perspectives, there lies potential to build a coalition of the willing, fostering a collaborative approach to rethink our transportation future.

The floating highway in an American Lake: locating car shippers in Caribbean automobility

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Abstract

Though the US-led mid-twentieth-century industrialization experiment in Puerto Rico failed, it established the foundation for the ongoing expansion of the island's car system. This paper places the logics underpinning Puerto Rico's highway expansion and the supply of cars within a critical logistics framework, attentive to the specific power geometries fostered by logistical thought and practice. Recognizing logistics as a calculative rationality and a suite of spatial practices facilitating the untrammelled movement of capital, this paper examines the imperial logics that underpin the supply of cars in Puerto Rico, focusing on the actual mobilities of automobiles and ships to unpick the politics of their entwined yet distinctive nature. The paper unravels the complex network of public-private interests that produced a resilient automobile culture in Puerto Rico, emphasizing the legal geographies of shipping that shape imperial circulatory and infrastructural politics. Of particular importance are U.S. regulatory regimes, such as the Merchant Marine Act of 1920, a protectionist measure that established that maritime trade within the U.S. should occur exclusively in U.S.-flagged vessels. This paper argues that federal statutes such as the Merchant Marine Act shaped how power is mobilized and diffused by car importers, shipping companies, and the colonial state, actively reproducing automobility. The concept of the floating highway becomes a key site to understand the expansion of automobility within Puerto Rico, as it facilitated competitive innovation and rent extraction opportunities for car carriers by leveraging the spillover effects of colonial capitalism. By examining the growth and consolidation of an importation-based automotive industry in Puerto Rico and the im/mobilities produced by it, this paper positions the often overlooked shipped mobilities of the automobile as essential to the operation of the larger colonial economy in Puerto Rico.

Keywords: automobility, logistics, car shipping, Puerto Rico

*Speaker

Alternative Mobility Histories in Transport and Motor Museums: The Case of the National Motor Museum of Australia and the Story of Holden

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Abstract

The public face of mobility history is the museum. Yet, transport museums can be notoriously narrow and traditional in their approach and scope. If we want to broaden our public understanding of mobility, including alternative mobilities and alternative stories about motoring, then transport museums, and motor museums more specifically, need to be open to more innovative story-telling and more challenging subjects. They also need to appeal courageously to a broad visitor base outside the traditional male motoring enthusiast.

This paper explores the ways in which the National Motor Museum of Australia tells alternative mobility stories within the context both of motoring history and the museum's remit as a state supported institution. The paper discusses how exhibitions at the museum offer alternative readings of Australian motoring history, focusing on a study of the *Holden & Me* exhibition as a starting point and a means to tell a different story about the nationally significant Holden motor car and its production.

After the Holden factory closed in 2017, Australia lost its last automotive manufacturing plant. This event presented the National Motor Museum with a unique opportunity to expand its collections and to tell a story of motoring that went beyond the usual motor museum experience of 'cars lined up'. *Holden & Me* is an exhibition that personalises the experience of workers in the Holden factory through a focus on oral history and small objects. Holden provided new migrants with a job, a home and a community. The Holden story is more than the story of a car, it is the story of migration and economic upward mobility.

This paper will also refer to other exhibitions that explore the diversity of mobility stories. Together, these exhibitions assert the National Motor Museum's desire to engage the visiting public in multiple ways to explore national motoring experiences that go beyond technical specifications of makes and models.

This paper argues that if we want to have space and licence to tell stories of multiple mobilities, then we need to encourage and support motor museums to break out from their traditional moulds and look beyond the car body to the stories behind the cars. The experience of the National Motor Museum and its engagement with the story of Holden offers an example of how this might be done.

*Speaker

Keywords: motor museum, General Motors Holden, Australia, exhibition, automotive manufacturing

Blue Economy, Maritime Transport: Alternatives for Decongestion of Automobile Roadways in Akwa-Ibom State

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Abstract

During the colonial era, maritime transportation in Akwa-Ibom State was greatly enhanced by the Europeans who were in business with the people (Udoka 1995). Towns that were located on the coast served as important contact points for Africans and Europeans; their locations were determined by their accessibility from the sea and by the productivity of the hinterlands. Ports directed attention and trade toward the coast, the colonial metropolis and the world economy while seaports grew in size and areas closest to the sea were the most accessible. Rivers such as the Niger and the Cross River and river ports, provided ready-made highways, but were characteristically slow with inflexible arteries that were not fully navigable for some time; unfortunately, their importance declined with the development of automobile roadways; however, over the years, people travelling between Cross-River riverine communities and Akwa-Ibom State have continuously encountered transportation challenges due to the dilapidated state of the popular Calabar-Itu road (Ukpong 1986). The maritime industry in Akwa-Ibom State seemed to have gone moribund especially after the eclipse of European trading activities in the area during the colonial period not until in recent years when the state government began to make concerted efforts to ensuring the revitalisation of the industry as a solid and efficient alternative to automobile transport. In examining the rich maritime environment of the state and how it can be revitalised judging from the development of a seaport at Ibaka, Mbo Local Government Area to the already established Maritime Academy of Nigeria at Oron, the oil terminal golf courses at Ibeno Local Government Area and the Ibom Deep Sea Port Project (Uko 2024), the paper adopted the qualitative method of research where relevant documentary data, government project blueprints and published literature were analysed and the content extracted for writing this paper. The findings of this paper reveal that the state government with a resolve to reposition the state to become the most efficient maritime hub in the Gulf of Guinea is set to lay greater emphasis on the advancement of maritime development which will foster blue economy opportunities, reduce heavy reliance on automobile transport and enhance maritime connectivity.

Keywords: Keywords: Blue Economy, Maritime, Automobile, Transportation, Mobility, Alternatives

*Speaker

Cargo bikes for urban logistics – is cycle logistics still alternative?

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Abstract

This paper dwells on the recent transformations experienced by cycle logistics operators, who transport goods that are increasingly voluminous and invest in cargo bicycles that have higher and higher carrying capacity, such as cargo tricycles or big bicycle trailers. These new somehow experimental vehicles (Abord de Chatillon (*forthcoming*)), made out of bicycle and motorcycle parts, aim to position cargo cycles as potential replacement for light-duty vehicles for the urban last-mile. This study is based on fieldwork among four cycle logistics operators in the urban area of Lyon in France, each of whom runs a very diverse delivery cycles (cargo bikes, trikes and trailers). The discourse of these operators is analysed in order to highlight the arguments used to present their activity as alternative. This study shows that the discourse held by operators regarding these new cycles tends to focus on the similarities and differences that they hold with light-duty vehicles in terms of carrying capacities and environmental impact. However, these new cargo cycles also challenge alternative and punk urban sub-cultures historically associated with bicycle messengering that are based on speed, risk-taking and autonomy (Kidder 2009; Furness 2010). The rise of these new vehicles, the profitability of which remains dependent on public subsidies, is thus reconfiguring the professional subcultures of cycle delivery. This paper contributes to existing knowledge on mid-size vehicles (Bigo et al. 2022), on technical innovation within transportation and to critical cycling research (Spinney 2020).

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Keywords: cargo cycles, tricycles, urban logistics, innovation, cycling, bike messenger

Alternative modes for the last mile. Urban consolidation centres for goods transport in cities

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Abstract

The paper reports on pilot projects in European cities to regulate delivery traffic for deliveries to shops, restaurants and hotels in cities in order to reduce motorised freight traffic, reduce noise and exhaust fumes and improve the quality of life in cities. Solutions are presented for cities with historic city centres worthy of protection, such as Vicenza and Parma in Italy, La Rochelle in France and Dutch cities such as Delft. Large cities such as Paris are also covered. Urban consolidation centres for deliveries to city centres are discussed. Solutions for the last mile with cargo bikes and electrically powered small delivery vans from consolidation points are presented. The role of parcel services such as Federal Express and United Parcel Service for the last mile is discussed. Delivery from a garage under the Place de la Concorde in Paris is presented and the delivery by ships on the Seine. The European Union's travelling exhibition called Bentobox, which also made a stop in Berlin, is discussed.

Keywords: urban consolidation centre, traffic reduction, city logistic

^{*}Speaker

Unplugged Transitions: The Missing Links in Dutch Truck Electrification

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Abstract

The rapid electrification of trucks is essential for achieving the decarbonization targets, yet the coordination problem between battery electric trucks and charging infrastructure threatens to delay this transition. This study applies the innovation ecosystem framework to analyse this problem by studying the actor roles, interactions and (mis)alignments at the system level. Drawing from the data collected through literature search and semi-structured interviews of eight key stakeholders (transporters, manufacturers, grid operators, etc.), the analysis identifies the ‘transporters’ as the critical bottleneck within the innovation ecosystem. Despite having the least capacity to absorb it, transporters bear the biggest burden of financial and operational risk. As a solution, this article proposes decoupling the cost of chargers from that of trucks and redistributing the burden across other actors of the innovation ecosystem. This decoupling can be achieved using business models that leverage the tenets of sharing economy; two such business models are analysed in this study. The first model allows a top-down orchestration by introducing a new actor in the ecosystem who provides, operates and maintains the chargers for the transporters. This model mimics the current refuelling practice of diesel trucks and shifts the burden away from the transporters, potentially accelerating the transition. The second model proposes a collaboration amongst the proximally located transporters to co-invest in shared chargers. While this model is more challenging in terms of governance and trust building, it reduces the individual burden and distributes it amongst the collaborating partners allowing a bottom-up emergence. This analysis contributes to the literature by taking a system level perspective of the actors and their interactions within the innovation ecosystem of battery electric trucks and reconceptualizing the notion of ownership in this context. Though applied in the Dutch context, this framework can be transferred to other urban freight ecosystems suffering from similar misalignments.

Keywords: battery electric trucks, innovation ecosystem, sharing economy, freight electrification, charging infrastructure

*Speaker

Cycling Beyond Boundaries: Gender, Safety, and Family Roles in Child-Escorting Mobilities

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Abstract

Cycling is one of the alternative forms of mobility that is currently being promoted the most in Europe with a view to reducing greenhouse gas emissions from transport. Yet, bicycles are gendered 'attributes' and emotionally invested objects central to micro-practices that reflect dominant norms of femininity and masculinity. Over the past decade, the diversification of bicycles and accessories has paved the way for new gendered uses and tactics. This evolution democratises cycling, modulates its sporting dimension, and creates novel *assemblages* of bicycles and cyclists.

This presentation analyses the tensions arising from the aesthetic relationship, linking bodily sensoriality and affectivity, between the body and the bicycle, which challenge dominant gender norms. It particularly focuses on child-escorting practices as mobilities that crystallise risks related to bodily integrity, gender roles, and family dynamics.

Based on in-depth and ride-along interviews with 13 daily cyclists in and around Montreuil, and 27 interviews with bicycle experts (including dealers, repairers, and members of cycling associations) from Grenoble, Lausanne, Montreuil, and Strasbourg, the research nuances the evolution of equipment and the aesthetic relationship to bicycles within local material cultures. By describing specific pieces of equipment and protective 'skins', the presentation highlights affective investments in cycling objects and the role of bicycles in fostering a renewed ethic of care within alternative mobilities. Moving away from the car system's safety reference, parents adapt equipment to secure children within varied equipment trajectories across the four French and Swiss contexts studied.

Claire Pelgrims is an F.R.S. FNRS Scientific Collaborator at the Université libre de Bruxelles, Belgium. Her research focuses on the tension between speed and slowness in the evolution of mobility, the deployment of active mobility and social inequalities, particularly those linked to gender. She recently published *Histoire des transports et des mobilités en France* (Armand Colin, 2022) with L. Baldasseroni and E. Faugier and *Entre vitesse et lenteur. Tension entre imaginaires de la mobilité à Bruxelles* (EuB, 2024). Claire.pelgrims@ulb.be

Keywords: Cycling, Gender, child, escorting, aesthetics, care, equipment

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The Child as Active Participant in Urban Life: Children, Streets, and Soviet Pedagogical Innovations in the USSR, 1920s

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Abstract

This paper explores the evolving relationship between children and the urban environment in the Soviet Union during the 1920s. The rapid growth of Moscow and Saint Petersburg brought about the need to reorganize the street space with the focus on unimpeded mobility. The measures associated with this trend led to the gradual suppression of traditional pedestrian practices, including children's free street activities. Simultaneously, widespread child homelessness prompted conservative pedagogical efforts to isolate children from the perceived dangers of the streets through playground campaigns.

Alternative approach was offered by the Commission for the Study of Streets and Their Influence on Children (1922). This research group aimed to understand children as active participants in urban life rather than simply victims of its negative influences. Through ethnographic methods, including detailed observations of children's behavior and the physical and social characteristics of Moscow streets like Old Arbat, the Commission sought to identify both the risks and the educative potential of the urban environment.

Children's literature of the middle of 1920s became a significant medium for negotiating the new urban reality for young Soviet citizens. Moving away from fairy tales towards "books about everyday life," authors depicted modern urban infrastructure, such as automobiles and electrified streetcars, often as symbols of progress. These narratives also highlighted the vulnerability of child pedestrians in the conditions of the intensified street rhythms. This literary trend, mirroring the "Here and Now" movement in the US, aimed to familiarize children with their immediate surroundings and foster reflexivity in the contexts of urbanization and industrialization.

By analyzing the work of the Commission and the children's literature about the big Soviet cities, I would argue that the 1920s in Soviet Russia witnessed the emergence of the concept "child's right to the city". Children, through their everyday activities, asserted their constant presence on urban streets, a phenomenon observed and affirmed by these pedagogical and literary endeavors. My research offers insights into early Soviet urban planning, infrastructural developments, and the new understanding of urban childhood in a rapidly transforming society.

Karina Povsteva is a Master student at the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Her scholarly interests include history of

*Speaker

pedestrian mobility in Russia, children's literature in the early Soviet period, pedagogy in the USSR, sociology of reading, history of technology, urban history.

Keywords: urban anthropology, street safety, children's literature, urban childhood, Soviet Union

Play Streets in Copenhagen: Children's Play as a Challenge to Modernist Planning, 1930-1970

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Abstract

Since the dawn of automobility, cars and children's play have made for an uneasy combination. Their strict separation reflects wider binaries within modernist planning. Play streets subverted the modernist ideal, allowing for the coexistence of cars and children, and sparked much debate around safety, urban space allocation, and the role of mothers. Emerging in Copenhagen in the 1930s as an alternative to playgrounds in poor and densely populated neighbourhoods, play streets in the postwar period were transformed into an element of traffic integration, absorbed into modernist planners' schemes of citywide differentiation. This article spotlights the ambiguities within this, drawing on Danish newspaper articles, archive sources, and City Council debates to trace discussions around play streets, their role in the eyes of various stakeholders—from mothers to (predominantly male) urban planners, from police officers to landlords—and their (meagre) implementation during the period 1930–1970. It shows how, despite efforts to provide children with dedicated places for play, they often preferred spaces not purposefully designed for them, such as the street, with many stakeholders acknowledging this fact. Struggling to reconcile cars and children's play, play streets appeared as a pragmatic approach, which later became increasingly contested.

Keywords: children, play streets, playgrounds, shared space, urban planning

*Speaker

Walking and Cycling in Kano: A Means for Mobility Alternatives

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Abstract

Kano, one of Nigeria's largest cities, faces significant challenges related to urban mobility, including traffic congestion, air pollution, and inadequate public transportation systems. This paper explores the potential of walking and cycling as alternative modes of transportation in Kano, emphasizing their benefits for sustainable urban mobility. By examining the current state of infrastructure, cultural attitudes, and public health implications, this study aims to highlight the advantages of promoting walking and cycling as viable options for residents. The research draws on qualitative and quantitative data, including surveys, interviews, and case studies from other cities that have successfully integrated non-motorized transport. Key findings indicate that enhancing pedestrian and cycling infrastructure can lead to improved accessibility, reduced environmental impact, and increased physical activity among the population. Additionally, the paper discusses the socio-economic implications of promoting walking and cycling, including potential job creation in the cycling industry and reduced transportation costs for low-income residents. Challenges such as safety concerns, cultural perceptions, and the need for policy support are also addressed, alongside recommendations for urban planners and policymakers. By fostering a culture of walking and cycling, Kano can transform its urban landscape, improve the quality of life for its citizens, and pave the way for a more sustainable and resilient urban future. This study ultimately advocates for comprehensive strategies that prioritize non-motorized transport, positioning walking and cycling as essential components of Kano's mobility framework.

Brief Biography

Yusuf Madugu was born in Kano (Nigeria) and attended Bayero University Kano where he obtained Bachelor and Master Degree in socio-economic history (with special focus on trade and transport). He obtained his PhD in URBAN MOBILITY HISTORY from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria (ABU). Madugu is currently an Associate Professor with the Department of History, Bayero University Kano. He has deep interest in multidisciplinary scholarship and scholarly discourse which propelled him to develop networks within and outside his University. He is the co-editor with Njogu Morgan of the research-publication project *Cycling Cities: The African Experience* and the "African Urban Mobility" research network. He was also a founding member of the *International Network for Transport Research in Africa* (INTRA). He is currently a guest editor of T2M special issue about transportation and mobility in Africa

Keywords: Walking, Cycling, Mobility, Alternatives, Kano

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T2M Annual Conference 2025, Eindhoven: Mobility Alternatives

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Trajectories of a walking boom:

How to establish pedestrian-forward planning in German cities?

The promotion of walking in German municipalities is gaining momentum. Recent initiatives – from walking “check-ups” and the appointment of walking officers to the publication of a National Walking Strategy – have introduced new staff, new approaches and new ideas about walking into local administrative structures. While the pandemic has already contributed to an increase in walking trips and distances (MiD [Follmer], 2025), this development in municipalities could further affect everyday practices of walking on the ground.

The quality of this potential “upswing” (Büttner & Weber, 2019) in pedestrian-forward planning deserves a closer investigation: How is such planning being established within German municipal administrations? What ideas about walking are shaping this rise? Does it represent a substantial shift within planning practices – not just on the streets?

The study is based on 22 interviews with operational and context experts from German administrations, planning firms, research and advocacy groups (Meuser & Nagel, 1991). It looks at planning as dynamic and diverse practices, carried by different actors and entangled with the everyday practices they aim to plan for (Larsen, 2017; Levin-Keitel & Behrend, 2023; Shove et al., 2012). The analysis further draws on the steps of the policy cycle (Howlett et al., 2009 in Marsden & Reardon, 2017) and the differentiation of instrumental and place-based rationalities applied to pedestrian-forward planning (Lindelöw et al., 2016; Stangl, 2008).

This paper identifies six intertwined trajectories of how pedestrian-forward planning has been established in German municipalities – focusing on carriers (I-III), practice relations (IV), meanings (V) and materials (VI) of this development:

- I. how other actors, but the federal government, have carried the movement to the national level and provided structural support to municipalities;
- II. how a “new generation” of planners is further carrying the integration of pedestrian-forward planning in municipalities;
- III. how their everyday planning practices have increased awareness of walking as a transport mode among colleagues in municipal administrations;
- IV. how the establishment of walking is set in relation to cycling-forward planning in municipalities, with tensions between demands to, on the one hand, emancipate itself from cycling as a “winner topic” that can also thrive in a politically conservative agenda and, on the other hand, forming an alliance with cycling advocates for the sake of a comprehensive social-ecological transformation;
- V. how the diversity of meanings related to walking is emphasized in planning practices, but reduced to aspects of accessibility and traffic safety in the context of political pressure;
- VI. how the walking boom on the streets is rather an *argument for* than a *result of* pedestrian-forward planning in municipalities.

The study reconstructs how pedestrian-forward planning has advanced through engaged carriers, supportive blueprints and thematic flexibility. Yet the increase in walking trips cannot be attributed to already implemented measures of municipalities. Rather, the “upswing” of pedestrian-forward planning refers to an increasing success of agenda setting – from the national level through municipal planning departments. Further aspects of the policy cycle – policy formulation, implementation or even evaluation – remain largely untouched by this upswing (Marsden & Reardon, 2017).

The study shows how walking is politicized in municipal contexts. In everyday planning practices, walking can develop and mold into ambiguous rationalities of both a place-based approach that emphasizes the quality of stay or an instrumental, rule-based approach that regards walking as just another – alternative – transport mode in the same logics as cycling or car driving (Lindelöw et al., 2016).

For research, policy and planning, the findings highlight both the potential and ambivalence of pedestrian-forward planning – that is due to political constellations in municipalities and, overall, the dominance of the elephant in the room: automobility. On the one hand, walking practices do have the potential to substitute short car rides and to more systematic integration with public transport. Pedestrian-forward planning can, aided by adequate data and awareness within administrations, strengthen the position of walking as a transport mode. On the other hand, walking practices encompass many more aspects and contributions to the coordination of everyday life than being a mere mobility alternative. As some planning experts argue, the role of quality of stay and liveability within the social-ecological transformation need further elaboration – and walking can form a central part in this context.

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Weather, Clothing, and Cycling: How Forecast Influences Transport Choices

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Abstract

Cycling is a healthy, sustainable, and liberating mode of transport. To reduce dependence on energy-intensive alternatives, it is crucial to encourage more people to choose the bicycle. However, weather significantly impacts cyclists' motivation. When rain pelts the windows and wind shakes the trees, many opt for other means of transport. Statistics reveal a sharp decline in cycling during winter months and on rainy summer days.

What can be done to keep more people in the saddle year-round? A key factor is clothing. Its ability to protect against the elements plays a crucial role in the comfort of a ride-and thus in whether the bicycle is chosen or not.

To explore this relationship, an ethnological study was conducted on cyclists' clothing choices across varying weather conditions and seasons on everyday journeys. Cyclists were observed and photographed on both long-distance routes and local roads to analyze their attire and equipment in relation to actual weather and forecasts. Interviews provided insight into how cyclists think about clothing-what prompts them to don a raincoat or instead take the car. For instance, how do glasses influence riding in the rain?

The study also examines how the market addresses cyclists' needs. What innovative solutions aim to improve comfort in poor weather? Which products promise dry trousers and warm hands-and do they deliver? The study concludes by discussing how improved clothing design, smarter infrastructure, and targeted communication about weather conditions can help make everyday cycling more attractive-regardless of the weather.

The analysis is based on statistical data from the Danish Road Directorate, where historic traffic data is correlated with meteorological records to show how the impact of weather on cycling has changed over time. This is supplemented with historical photographs.

Keywords: cycling, weather, transport, dress

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National Survey of Brazilian Cyclists: Motivations, Challenges, and Opportunities

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Abstract

This study provides comprehensive insights into the cycling habits and demographics of cyclists across Brazil. Conducted between August and November 2024 and involved over 250 researchers interviewing 11,956 cyclists in 18 Brazilian cities. This extensive survey aimed to understand the motivations, habits, and socio-demographic characteristics of urban cyclists, providing valuable data to inform public policies and promote cycling as a sustainable mode of transportation. Notably, this is the only research that portrays Brazilian cyclists on a national scale, filling the gap created by the absence of a census on cyclists in Brazil. The findings highlighted that 84.4% of cyclists use their bicycles more than five times per week, with the main destination being work for 73.6% of respondents. Additionally, 53.8% of cyclists take 15 to 30 minutes for their main trips. Practicality is a key reason for cycling, cited by 42% of participants.

54.9% indicated they would use bicycles more frequently if there were improvements in cycling infrastructure, while 9.8% highlighted the need for better public safety to encourage more frequent cycling.

Female cyclists made up 15% of the interviewed cyclists, and a concerning issue was highlighted: 48.6% of female cyclists reported experiencing harassment while cycling, emphasizing the need for measures to ensure their safety and comfort.

There are significant regional differences in cycling data across Brazil and variations according to the size of the cities studied. These findings emphasize the necessity for tailored policies that consider the specific characteristics of each Brazilian region and the particular needs of cities of varying sizes.

The findings highlight the diversity of cyclists in Brazilian cities and their habits, motivations, and barriers to cycling. The results are critical for developing public policies at the national and local levels to promote cycling as a viable and attractive transportation option for Brazilians.

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Keywords: bicycle, active mobility, travel behaviour, Brazil

Planning and designing for electric micromobilities: mobility alternative opportunities and risks

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Abstract

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Shaun Williams is a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow at the Centre for Transport and Mobility (CeTraM), Aberystwyth University. His fellowship focuses on publishing papers related to his doctoral work which explored how app data, volunteered by cyclists, inform transport planning. His research interests include mobilities, transport planning, and infrastructure design guidance. Alongside his research, Shaun works as a transport professional in the UK.

Clara Glachant is a PhD Candidate in Smart, Active, and Sustainable Micromobility at the Eindhoven University of Technology (TU/e). Her dissertation focuses on the meanings and practices of micromobilities in the context of mobility transitions, particularly in the UK and in the Netherlands. Her research interests include mobilities, tensions between justice and sustainability, and transformative change.

Abstract:

While established and emerging technologies such as e-cycles and e-scooters – often called ‘e-micromobility’ – are increasingly common in cities, they are controversial. Indeed, these modes are portrayed (by different actors) as an extension of active travel and as a public health hazard. Equally, electric micromobilities are seen as sustainable mobility alternatives to automobilities (motorised modes) and as a competitor to velomobilities (human powered cycling). In this critical commentary we demonstrate how these perceptions raise tensions for planning and designing for electric micromobilities. Drawing upon existing literature on electric micromobility, we facilitate two questions for discussion. 1) To what extent do electric micromobilities fit within existing systems of mobilities? And (2) to what extent do electric micromobilities discussions distract from wider, dominant systems of mobility? Taking the empirical examples from different contexts globally, this paper provides a commentary (but not answers) to these critical questions. Rather, we demonstrate how electric micromobilities raises both opportunities for mobility alternatives, and risks for exacerbating and accelerating social injustices. At minimum, we call for further research into electric micromobility infrastructures. Why? Because electric micromobilities exists globally, irrespective of their definition or status as active or inactive modes. Calls to mitigate tensions between lighter mobilities is thus at the heart of this discussion.

Keywords: Electric micromobilities, E Cycles, E Scooters, Transport infrastructure, Mobility Justice.

*Speaker

Subway and everyday mobility

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Abstract

At "the end of streetcar suburbs lies car-oriented development" writes Scott (2013, p. 403), describing how Ottawa went from a tram-based city to a car centred one, based on planning processes around 1950. Urban planning is part of what shapes mobility, as places are produced through various processes over time. In dense cities people drives less, and travel more by other modes (Banister, 2011; Næss, 2012; Newman & Kenworthy, 1989). Transit-oriented development has reduced car dependence in many cities (Sheller, 2018). This paper investigates the representation and planning of transit-oriented development, focusing on Bjørndal, a suburb in Oslo. Developed in the 1980s, Bjørndal reflects a shift towards market-driven planning in a context of resource scarcity. In Bjørndal the subway was planned but never built. The reasoning at the time was cost in relation to planned density, the debate on the subway ran in parallel with a debate on who to build houses for.

The result today is local discontent with bus services and limited access, sparking ongoing debates and planning discussions for potential solutions. In the paper I examine how public transport has been represented in historical planning documents and how residents perceive and experience it today, in terms of access to mobility. How public transport are represented in planning documents, and perceived and lived by people in suburbia? By using Lefebvre's spatial triad (Hickman & Afonin, 2022; Lefebvre, 1991; Scott, 2013). I analyse the planned suburbs in relation to how it is practiced and lived. The study compares the representations in the plans from the beginning of the 1980s with current planning discussion, incorporating insights about the perceived and lived from interviews and a local Facebook group to understand how residents navigate climate-friendly mobility or car dependencies.

Keywords: everyday mobility, transit oriented development, spatial triad, subway, urban planning, climate mitigation, just mobilities

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Revanchist automobility and vanishing bus stations in the U.S.

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Abstract

Most discussion of mobility alternatives in the U.S. focuses on daily trips, not long-distance travel, where it is assumed that the plane and car are the only possibilities. For lower-income travelers, the intercity bus is a small but important alternative, especially Greyhound. However, in 2021, the parent company of Greyhound sold their buses to FlixBus; in 2022, they sold the remaining stations to a private equity firm. The fate of these stations has varied, with some remaining in operation, some up for sale, and some closing while passengers wait for buses on the street.

Even before the takeover by private equity, bus stations were being forced into more peripheral locations. Original bus stations were nearly all within half a mile of the city center. As bus ridership declined with the rise of automobility, stations moved to the edge of downtown with good highway access. In more recent decades, intercity bus stations have been combined with central train stations or random transit stations. The logic seems to be that all non-car travelers have the same mobility needs-and the same failure to participate in automobility-so one set of infrastructure is enough to serve both.

I introduce the concept of *revanchist automobility* to mean the production of urban spaces and infrastructure that punish residents and travelers who cannot afford to drive. This punishment is not for those who choose not to own a car-such people use transit, micromobilities, and ridesharing within the city, and they use airplanes or rent cars to travel between cities. It is the working-class population who cannot afford a car, or where one car is shared among multiple drivers, who are the subjects of this revanchism. I focus on how revanchist automobility is targeting U.S. intercity bus stations and therefore bus riders themselves for displacement.

Keywords: long, distance travel, intercity bus, bus station, united states

*Speaker

Testing the Principles of the '15-Minute City' in Socialist-Era Housing Estates in Kraków, Poland

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Abstract

The "15-minute city" has emerged as a leading urban planning strategy aimed at enhancing sustainability, livability, and accessibility by ensuring that residents can meet most of their daily needs within a short walk or bike ride. While widely viewed as a contemporary concept, its core principles resonate with earlier planning models, including post-war housing estates in Central and Eastern Europe. This study examines the extent to which 24 socialist-era housing estates in Kraków, Poland-constructed between 1949 and 1989-embody the goals of the 15-minute city.

Using spatial network analysis in QGIS, we evaluate these estates against key indicators: walkability, access to green spaces, public transportation, and proximity to essential services. We compare our findings with Poland's the 1974 urban planning and housing code guidelines, which promoted service accessibility and integrated neighborhood design.

The findings reveal that many of these estates already reflect the fundamental ideals of the 15-minute city. Despite outdated housing stock and infrastructure, their spatial layouts feature mixed land use, pedestrian-friendly networks, and significant green space integration. These design attributes contribute to reduced car dependency and a higher quality of urban life.

This research contributes to the broader discourse on sustainable urban redevelopment by demonstrating how socialist-era planning can inform contemporary strategies. The results offer valuable insights for urban policymakers and planners seeking to adapt existing large-scale residential areas to meet current environmental and social goals.

Keywords: 15 minute city, walkability, Kraków, Central and Eastern Europe, housing estates, socialist era

*Speaker

Automatic Configuration of Railway Operator Algorithms using Artificial Intelligence

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Abstract

Railway operators such as NS (Dutch Railways) make heavy use of different types of algorithms for planning and scheduling of railway operations and for making strategic decisions. Examples are local search or mathematical optimization algorithms for train maintenance scheduling, and Monte Carlo simulations or agent-based simulations for long-term strategic fleet planning. These algorithms all have configurations that need to be chosen, such as how the algorithm deals with trains splitting and combining or with trains arriving at the same location at the same time, how much to deviate from previous plans, or how to make the trade-off between short-term and long-term effects.

Properly configuring such algorithms for different scenarios (e.g. train station layouts, traffic or weather conditions) requires not only expertise in railway systems, but also in optimization or simulation algorithms. Even if such expertise is available in a single person or even a team of experts, the problem of configuring such algorithms is often too complex for human experts to solve to optimality due to the complex and high dimensional search space and the computational costs of the algorithms. Therefore, **automatic algorithm configuration (AAC)** techniques are key to supporting experts in making sure the algorithms are fine-tuned for the scenarios under consideration.

While simple AAC techniques are available, such as those based on randomly trying configurations or systematically trying all possibilities, **artificial intelligence (AI)** can help by efficiently and intelligently searching for the optimal configuration to increase computational efficiency. Possible approaches for this are **genetic algorithms**, **reinforcement learning**, and **surrogate-based optimization (SBO)**. The latter makes use of machine learning surrogate models to predict in advance how good a configuration will be. We show that SBO can find good configurations efficiently, thereby supporting human experts and improving decision-making for railway operators. This can help increase the capacity and safety of the railway network and reduce short and long-term costs.

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Keywords: railway, AI, surrogate models, machine learning, optimization, surrogate, based optimization, automatic algorithm configuration

^{*}Speaker

Determinants of Sustainable Mobility: Perception of Transfers and Public Transport Use Among University Students

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Abstract

In the context of pursuing sustainable urban mobility, cities continue to promote strategies that encourage the use of active modes of transport, such as cycling or walking, as well as public transportation-highlighting the integration of networks and fares as a key measure. Valencia, as a case study, has implemented such measures in recent years, aiming to improve user experience and attract more passengers to modes such as metro, tram, or bus. This study analyzes how the perception of transfer ease, considered a latent variable, influences mobility decisions among university students-a crucial population segment in terms of volume and predisposition to use these alternatives.

To address this question, a hybrid discrete choice model is used, combining traditional behavioral modeling techniques with methods designed to capture latent variables, i.e., those not directly observable, such as perceptions and attitudes. The data were collected through in-person surveys conducted with students from two campuses of public universities in the city, including both observable aspects (frequency of use, cost, or transit time) and subjective information related to the transfer experience.

The main objective is to determine whether the perceived ease of making transfers has a significant impact on the likelihood of choosing public transport. In doing so, this study further explores the determinants that influence mode choice, contributing to a broader understanding of the elements that encourage or discourage the use of public transportation. Therefore, this research contributes to understanding how non-observable factors influence mode choice and provides results that can support better policy design aimed at promoting urban public transportation.

Keywords: sustainable mobility, perception of transfer, urban transport policy, modal choice

^{*}Speaker

Promises, pathways, and pitfalls: Tracing a decade of MaaS research

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Abstract

Over the past decade, Mobility as a Service (MaaS) has emerged as one of the most debated concepts in the field of urban mobility. MaaS is a potential alternative to car-centric systems, and promises integrated, user-oriented transport that could shift everyday travel patterns toward more sustainable and inclusive forms. This promise has generated a rapidly expanding and diverse academic conversation. But how has this conversation evolved? Which ideas, studies, and turning points have shaped the development this strand of literature? This paper takes a retrospective look at ten years of MaaS research, using main path analysis (MPA) to trace the main scientific trajectories that have defined the field. Moving beyond descriptive bibliometric reviews, MPA identifies influential works, traces thematic shifts, and highlights how research focus has changed over time. The findings offer an empirically based overview of the evolving priorities of MaaS scholarship: its early optimism, methodological branching, and unresolved debates. By reconstructing how academic discourse around MaaS has taken shape, the analysis invites reflection on what has been emphasized, what remains underexplored, and how the field relates to broader mobility transitions. In doing so, this study contributes to ongoing debates around mobility alternatives and the role of research in imagining (and questioning) future transport systems.

Keywords: MaaS, main path analysis, academic trajectory, scientific discourse

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Managing and promoting mobility alternatives through urban digital twins: An inquiry into the promises and perils of "Dutch Cycling Intelligence"

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Abstract

Praised as governing technologies for testing infrastructure scenarios and rendering municipal planning processes and decision-making transparent and participatory, urban digital twins (UDTs) hold the promise of putting visions of the "smart city" into operation. This paper focuses on the case of the Dutch "Geo-ICT" company Argaleo's UDT platform. Figuring as a technical interface and web-based dashboard to connect, standardise, and make accessible diverse micro-mobility data types, this UDT fuels the "Dutch Cycling Intelligence" (DCI) program. Vis-a-vis dominant and disproportionately monitored and thereby datafied transportation modes such as the car, DCI frames cycling as an alternative, sustainable form of mobility promoting its visibility and significance on the road by data analytics.

We conduct a discursive-material analysis following the epistemic object of Argaleo's UDT through its creation and use in the context of public management, distinguishing between practical opportunities and mere promises of the DCI outlook. Understanding UDTs as "steering technique that relies on a non-neutral and incomplete representation" (Korenhof et al. 2021), our analysis surfaces "big data imaginaries" (Rieder 2018) that various stakeholders connect to the technology. Inquiring into "datafication" processes (cf. Behrendt & Sheller 2024) at play, we pay particular attention to the question how featured data analytics and related visions of (semi-)autonomous decision-making in navigational infrastructures (e.g. velocity fuelled by the imaginary of the 10-minute-city) might favour certain types of road users (e.g. e-micro-mobility users with abled bodies), jeopardising or excluding others' mobilities. By highlighting frictions and alternative ways in which the digital twinning of urban micro-mobility (cf. Mattern 2021) could play out, this contribution scrutinises prevailing technocapitalist views on mobility policy-making, questioning if and how UDTs could live up to their promise of democratic decision-making.

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Keywords: "big data" imaginaries, data, driven policy, making, datafication, democratic decision, making, cycling intelligence, cycling policy, micro, mobility data, urban digital twin

Excessive Capitalism: The Impact of ‘Hire Purchase’ Rental Services of Tricycle in Enugu Southeastern Nigeria on Peasant Drivers, 2007-2015

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Abstract

This paper analyses the socioeconomic impact of excessive capitalism in tricycle operators in Enugu, Nigeria, laying great focus on the endemic ‘Hire Purchase’ rental of tricycles during the tenure of Governor Sullivan Chime in Enugu State, 2007-2015. This period saw an unprecedented surge in the demand for hire-purchase rental contracts by a plethora of unemployed men, ranging from ages 20-65. While this contract system provided employment opportunities for unemployed men, Hire Purchase rental organizers have taken this to be an avenue for exploiting peasant tricycle drivers. This work examines the evolution of the Hire purchase system in Enugu state, how it degenerated into an instrument of excessive capitalism and the impacts of excessive capitalism on the main actors namely the tricycle riders, commuters and the society. Excessive capitalism has become the order of the day in the tricycle business in Enugu and this has led to unpleasant circumstances such as economic inequalities facilitated by inflated rental costs, restrictive contract terms, and exorbitant interest rates by the tricycle rental organizers on the tricycle peasant drivers. These peasant drivers tend to earn peanuts, which is barely enough to cater for their many needs. For these drivers to keep body and soul together, they tend to go into more financial ditches in ways of taking loans from formal and informal credit facilities, which also affects their overall well-being. This study also highlights the impact of the exploitative attitudes of these rental organizers on the socioeconomic disposition of the tricycle operators. With the hike in fuel prices, the cost of maintenance and highly competitive structure of the transport system, the impact of excessive capitalism on mobility and the transportation sector is also highlighted in addition to immediate and long-term like reckless driving habits to meet up with daily targets, accidents, and other traffic problems. Solutions to the problems will also be highlighted in this work, to provide the government, regulatory bodies and interested stakeholders with suggestions to remedy the situation. This paper uses data from newspapers, oral interviews from tricycle riders, hire purchase organizers, passengers and other private users.

Keywords: Excessive Capitalism, Hire Purchase, Tricycle Operators, rental contracts, Peasant drivers

1. Introduction

Transportation is undoubtedly one of the most essential sectors of human activity. Without it, virtually all aspects of human life would come to a standstill. As Ajiboye et al. (2020) noted, transportation is the engine of socio-economic development in any nation. In other words, it not only facilitates daily human operations but also drives economic growth and societal advancement. Among the various modes of urban transport in Nigeria, the tricycle—colloquially known as 'Keke Napep'—has emerged as a prominent form of informal intra-city transportation and a significant source of income for many (Modibbo et al., 2017). This accounts for the remarkable increase in its usage across Enugu and other Nigerian cities in recent years.

Tricycle is predominantly known as 'Keke Napep' in Nigeria as a direct consequence of the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) of President Olusegun Obasanjo's administration to curb poverty and empower its citizens economically (Ajiboye et al., 2020). The primary aim of the initiative was to reduce the rate of unemployment in the country, which would effectively mitigate involvement in the perpetration of crimes. In Enugu, which is the case study of this paper, the introduction and expansion of tricycle transportation, in line with NAPEP, especially during the tenures of Governor Sullivan Chime (2007-2015) became a critical component of urban mobility and a popular source of employment for thousands of residents. Although this was a feat to applaud in ensuring the alleviation of poverty, other factors exist to undermine its very essence. One of these is the unregulated Hire Purchase scheme which seems to exploit rather than to empower poor, unemployed tricycle drivers with their overly inflated interest rates. Ibrahim et al. (2018) in their work bluntly noted that the introduction of tricycles (Keke NAPEP) by both government and private individuals; that is 'hire purchase operators' was meant to empower poor, jobless and unemployed Nigerians, but unemployment and poverty still remain on the increase in the country.

Hire Purchase as a concept is very critical in grasping the very plight of many tricycle drivers in Enugu State. According to section 1(1) of the Hire Purchase Act, 1965, Hire Purchase means an agreement for the bailment of goods under which the bailee may buy the goods or under which the property in the goods will or may pass to the bailee and whereby the bailee agrees to pay to the bailor a sum or a series of sums by way of periodic payments, and the bailee's possession of the goods is conditional on the making of such payments. Afolayan and Aladesanmi (2022) examined the concept as a contract of hire with the option to purchase. In the context of tricycles, many drivers operate vehicles that they do not yet own and pay specified sums as per the agreement. Unemployed persons who do not possess the financial ability to purchase tricycles usually go to rental operators in order for them to provide the vehicle to engage in wealth creation. However, as Afolayan and Aladesanmi (2022) further described, many of these agreements contain terms—some imposed by the owners, and others by law—that are often onerous and unfavorable to the hirer, creating a cycle of debt and economic vulnerability rather than empowerment. In the course of this research in major tricycle stations in Enugu, including Abakpa, Zik-Agbani and New Heaven Axis, attention was brought to the deplorable economic disposition of peasant rental drivers, ranging between ages 20-65 (Ojukwu et al, 2020). From data collected, it was revealed that most of the people that go into this rental system as organized by hire purchase operators are family heads with children, laden with so many financial responsibilities and no other alternative source of income. It would be exigent to note also that a number of these men have little or no educational background. Lack of education deepens

inequalities and as a direct result keeps the drivers from having full comprehension of contracts that they sign, thereby making way for exploitation. Adebayo and Ipingbemi (2016) in their work had this to say:

Findings indicated that all the respondents were male, 73.4% had no more than secondary education and 72.8% earned below N4,000 daily. Unemployment was the main reason why 55.5% went into the business, only 35.4% held valid driver's licenses and extortion from traffic agents was at a staggering 38.6%.

To strengthen the arguments, a newspaper report highlighted that many commercial drivers agree to a hire purchase without proper scrutiny of the terms of the contract, due to the pressure of looking for a source of income, thus pushing them into signing exploitative agreements and some commercial drivers were not educated enough about hire purchase agreements and therefore leave the contractual terms to breakdown and the parties involved fall apart (Punch, 2024).

This explains the overwhelming financial strain on these mostly uneducated hire purchase drivers and portrays the extent to which profit motive overrides ethical, social or humanitarian considerations, especially in relation to the economically feeble.

2. Study Area

Enugu is the capital of Enugu State, which is one of the five states in Southeastern Nigeria (John-Nsa, 2021). Enugu derived from two Igbo words, "Enu" (meaning "top" or "high") and "Ugwu" (meaning "hill"), portraying the city's location at the foot of the Udi Hills (Ogbalu, 1975). Enugu's modern development commenced in 1909, following the discovery of coal by British geologists led by Albert Ernest Kitson in the Udi Ridge. This discovery prompted the establishment of a permanent settlement in 1912, as the colonial administration launched mining operations and constructed the Enugu Colliery (Jaja, 1982). The town rapidly evolved into a major coal export hub, especially after the completion of the railway linking it to Port Harcourt in 1916. This railway brought about rapid economic growth and accelerated urban development in Port Harcourt, thanks to advancement in transportation and access to the harbour (Ezeaku et al, 2023).

Enugu became even more important in 1938 when it was chosen as the administrative headquarters of the Eastern Provinces during British colonial rule. This brought a wave of professionals, traders, and civil servants to the city, gradually shaping it into a more diverse and growing urban center. Beyond its political and economic relevance, Enugu also became a key site of labor activism. In 1949, tensions reached a peak when coal miners protesting poor working conditions were met with deadly force—the colonial police opened fire at the Iva Valley, killing over 20 miners. This heartbreaking incident stirred outrage across the country and became a powerful symbol in Nigeria's fight for independence (Jaja, 1982).

After Nigeria's Independence in October, 1960, Enugu continued to serve as the administrative capital of the Eastern Region. However, its political significance rose during the Nigerian-Biafran War (1967-1970), when it was declared the administrative unit of the short-lived Republic of Biafra by Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu. The city thrived as Biafra's headquarters until it fell to the Nigerian Federal forces between October 1967 and January 1970 (Achebe 2012; Ezeaku et al, 2023).

Following the Civil war, Enugu has undergone alterations from being the regional capital to its contemporary position as a State capital with 17 Local governments within a divided Nigerian federation comprising Thirty-six (36) states (Ezeaku, 2023). Today Enugu is known for its conscious steps toward urbanization and remains a strong symbol of Igbo resilience and pride.

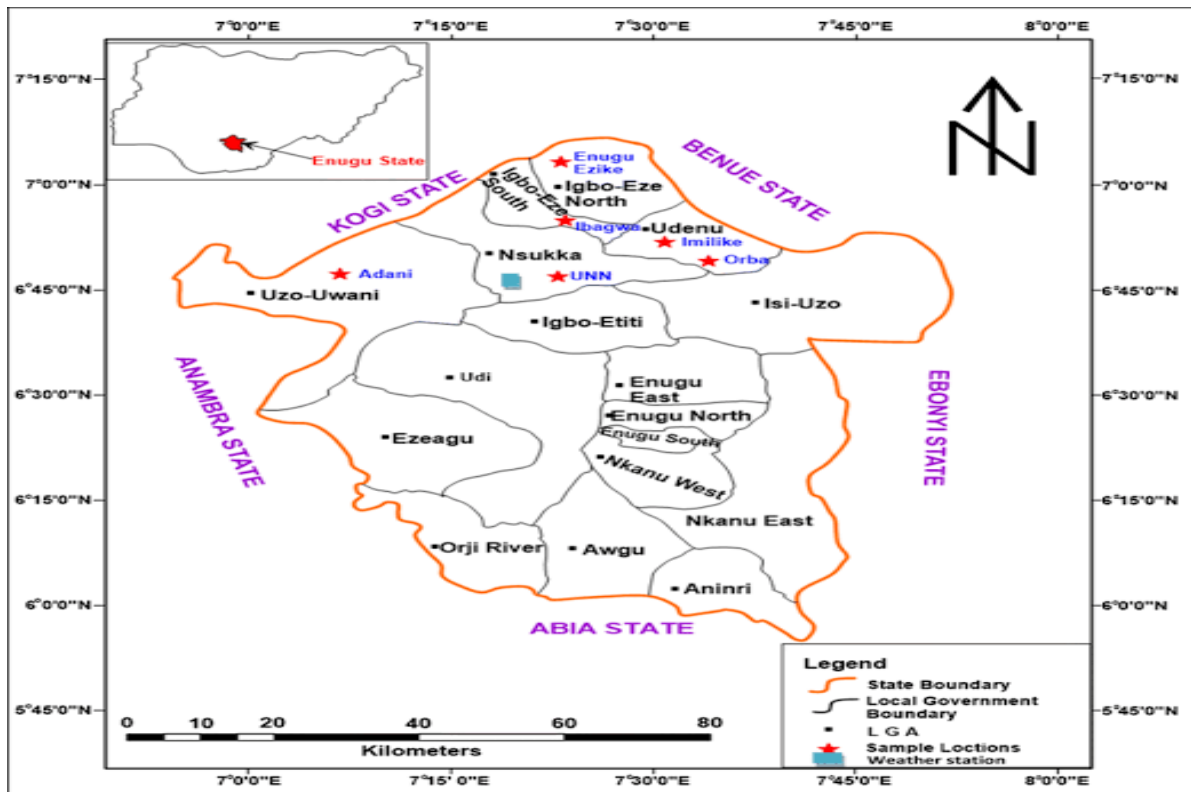


Fig 1. Map showing the 17 Local governments of Enugu State, Southeastern Nigeria.

3. The review of related literatures

Most existing scholarship on Hire purchase and tricycle issues focused on various aspects, ranging from socio-economic effects, impacts on mobility and environmental/ health concerns. In their paper, "Pulmonary functions of commercial Tricyclists (Keke Napep riders) in Enugu State, Nigeria", Ojukwu et.al (2020) took an environmental and health stance in the study of tricycle operations. They mention that tricyclists are continuously vulnerable to vehicle emissions and other pollutants due to the nature of their job and vehicle design, which could be hazardous to their health. They justified their argument by examining the fact that tricycles are powered by gasoline engine or diesel and given the make of the vehicles having no doors and windows expose the occupants to respiratory conditions and environmental degradation. The authors did not look into peasant driver experiences and the socio-economic implications of hire purchase.

Abomaye (2018) in his work "Is the use of Keke Napep (A Tricycle) for poverty eradication in Nigeria: A Reality or mirage?" notes that most Keke drivers are not the immediate owners of the tricycles, but hire purchase the tricycle, so therefore use informal type of business. He states

further that hire purchase scheme makes the riders overdriven with work in order to meet up the payment schedules as the prices increased since they did not possess the financial ability to buy the tricycles directly from the government but from agents who stood up as middlemen, thereby making prices too exorbitant. As a direct result, Keke riders gained little or nothing to save after paying the hire purchase price of the Keke and as such could not generate enough income to take care of their personal needs and have spill over to save.

Mgbemena (2013) in her "Language, communication on wheels and national development: The inscriptions on tricycle (Keke) example" reiterates the truth that commercial transportation is strategic in national economy and enhances mobility of material and human resources. She advises that the proliferation of Keke in major cities as well as the penchant for writing on the different parts certainly calls for an academic inquiry. Furthermore, she stated that Keke Napep as a commercial means of transportation was created to serve as a strategy to convert 'area boys' from idlers to a productive workforce.

Edike (2009) in his newspaper article titled "Napep tricycle operators hail Chime on lifting of ban", addresses the relief of tricycle operators to the good news that the government of Governor Sullivan Chime had withdrawn its position toward banning tricycles. Mr. Hyacinth Ngwu, one of his respondents and coordinator of Napep commended the decision and explained that Keke had been a good alternative to commercial motorcycle operators in Enugu, known as 'Okada', stressing the reduction of cost of transportation in order to facilitate mobility. He encouraged operators and hire purchase organizers not to capitalize on the government's lift of the ban and also encouraged government partnership to subsidize cost and acquire more of the tricycle to improve transport systems in the state.

4. Theoretical framework

This research is hinged on the theory of exploitation by Karl Marx on which he describes exploitation as the "theft of economic power in all class-based societies, including Capitalism, through the working class (or the proletariat) bring forced to sell their labour" (Marx, 1867). It argued that exploitation steals the significant economic inputs of the working-class, especially in capitalist settings and releases the surplus value to the bourgeois class.

Kurtz and Salvadori (2023) analyzed Marx's theory of exploitation thus:

Whenever a part of the working time of an individual materializes directly or indirectly into products that cannot be used or consumed by him or herself or other persons with whom he or she is deliberately prepared to share them, but are used or consumed by a third party.

As relates to this study, tricycle drivers, who could be categorized as the "proletariat" or "working-class" under hire purchase agreements often work under harsh and exploitative conditions. They are required to remit weekly or monthly payments that exceed the cost of the tricycle over time. This gives rental organizers the ability to accumulate surplus value at the detriment of the drivers, who are bedevilled with the costs of fuel, oil, maintenance, daily taxes on their various units and above all personal and family expectations. These lead them to thrive under the clutches of debt and economic vulnerabilities.



Fig 2. Keke Napep unit in Abakpa-Nike, Enugu East.

However, Harvey (2005) in line with Marx's theory of exploitation notes quite vividly that hire purchase systems create cycle of debt for peasant drivers. He went further to explain that via credit and hire purchase, the impoverished pay more for access to basic tools of survival. Fraser (2016) analyzes the connections between expropriation and exploitation and it would be important to also bridge their relatedness with peasant drivers under rental contracts. Most, lacking adequate legal guidance and government backing fall prey to harsh arrangements which leave them worse off financially. The aforementioned theories form a nexus in understanding how excessive capitalism in hire purchase system of tricycles affect peasant drivers within the study.

5. Research questions

The research questions for this study are to significantly critique the socio-economic impacts of hire purchase of tricycles on peasant drivers in Enugu, Southeastern Nigeria. Apart from this main question, other questions called from this study include:

- (a) What are the socio-economic dispositions of tricycle drivers involved in hire purchase in Enugu between 2007 and 2015?
- (b) What are the terms and conditions commonly attached to hire purchase agreements during this era and subsequent years?
- (c) How has hire purchase system impacted the livelihoods of tricycle drivers and commuters?
- (d) In what ways does the system reflect trends of excessive capitalism?
- (e) Will government intervention be useful?

6. Research methodology

This study adopts both the descriptive and qualitative method of research. Various active and past hire purchase drivers and organizers were interviewed. Existing materials on hire purchase of tricycles were consulted, synthesized and analysed descriptively in this paper. The relevant information provided from selected interviews has been incorporated in this paper as well as in building relevant data to justify the empirical concern of the research.

7. Participants

This study agrees with Thompson (1978) assertion that oral history democratized history by including voices of ordinary people. Employing field observation and in-depth interviews, the lived experiences of both peasant drivers and hire purchase organizers during these period were collected. This approach justifies significantly the need to examine subjects within their subjective state. It is also important to perceive their lived experiences from an autoethnographical vantage. Ellis (2004) confirms that autoethnography shows how social science can be both deeply personal and profoundly political.

Participants, comprising 5 individuals, were quite helpful in this study. Some of them would be assigned pseudonyms to ensure their confidentiality. Voluntary participation and secondary sources account for the study's comprehension. By examining these drivers and organizers story, we illuminate the unexplored angles of rental arrangements of tricycles in Enugu.

8. Results and Discussions – The lived experiences of peasant drivers and organizers

Interviews and discussions taken to scrutinize the experiences of peasant drivers in Enugu between 2007 and 2015 during the tenure of Governor Sullivan Chime goes an extent to redress the myriad misconceptions held by the public that hire purchase of tricycles or in fact another vehicle or article is a bed of roses and one of the fastest and ideal way of escape from poverty and acceptance into financial liberation, overlooking the very bitter truth that a plethora of factors exist to undermine the system. In the course of this study, I encountered persons who were quite disillusioned with the exploitative contracts of rental organizers of Keke Napep. For instance, one Mr. M.B, who acquired his tricycle via hire purchase between 2014 and 2015 had this to say:

"I acquired my tricycle through hire purchase system. I believe that the use of tricycle as a means of earning a living is quite a lucrative business. It allows for flexibility and independence. But the inclusion of hire purchase is a whole different game. Only on rare

occasions do you get a rental operator who is honest and sticks to the Hire Purchase regulations of the state to the latter. The price of a new tricycle was about N300,000 to N350,000 in 2007. By 2014, the price had increased to about N400,000. I am not a graduate and I lack the means to purchase my own Keke. So I had to go into the rental agreement in order to feed myself and keep up with the cost of living" (Personal Communication, July 6, 2025).

The revelation from this respondent shows the very reason why a lot of unemployed and financially incapacitated persons go into hire purchase agreements.

To explain the very nature of the system, a father of four and a Keke driver who was once a hire purchase driver but obtained his tricycle after full payments explained his contract terms with his hire purchase organizer. He stated that he started tricycle business in 2015. The price of a new TVS Keke Napep as at the time was about N450,000, which based on 2015 exchange rates, equaled approximately €1,920-€2,050 (Exchange-rates.org, 2015). As he noted, he did not have such amount to purchase the Keke, so therefore he resorted to the hire purchase system. The agreement he had with his rental organizer was for him to be given the Keke at the rate of N900,000 – a 100% markup on the original price, to pay a weekly sum of N17,308 for a period of 12 months. He mentioned that he pointed out the harshness of the terms and appealed for a reduction but his plea was dismissed. He was quickly informed that he was free to withdraw from the agreement if dissatisfied, as he could seek alternatives elsewhere. However, given his financial state and the pressure to provide for his family, he had no choice but to accept the contract and commence payment.

“A litre of fuel in 2015 cost about ₦95. I worked from Monday to Saturday and reserved Sundays for my family. On average, I consumed about 7 litres of fuel daily, which amounted to 42 litres weekly. Due to the competitive nature of the business, my average daily income was around ₦5,000, making it ₦30,000 weekly—though sometimes it was even less. According to the terms of my hire purchase contract, I was required to remit ₦17,308 every week. After making that payment, I was left with approximately ₦12,700. However, this did not account for other essential expenses such as fuel additives, mandatory ticketing fees, engine oil—which I replaced every 7 to 10 days at a cost of around ₦1,800—and general maintenance of the tricycle. If I deducted the weekly cost of fuel (₦4,000), oil (₦1,800), ₦600 weekly ticket fee, I would be left with approximately ₦6,300 (€27.39). This amount was barely enough to cater for my own needs, let alone those of my family. The cost of living is high. I had to provide food, cover utility bills, school fees and take care of other basic necessities. On occasions when the tricycle broke down, my family and I suffered the financial stress. I often had no choice but to secure loans from my Keke association or microfinance banks to repay with high interest. I was really on my toes at the time". (Personal Communication, July 13, 2025).

These data collated from my interviewees revealed the complex and exploitative system of hire purchase of tricycles in urban and peri-urban areas of Enugu. The harsh contractual terms, high operational cost and minimal government regulation have undermined the very reason for the

creation of the system, which was to create a conducive environment for grassroots economic growth and development.

For balance of view, some hire purchase organizers and firms were interviewed in the course of this study. One Mr. C. I, who also sells TVS brand-tricycles stated:

"Honestly, so many of my counterparts who give out Keke on hire purchase have turned the business into a lucrative one. Most do not follow some hire purchase code of conducts as written in hire purchase act. Before now, I used to trade in Keke parts in Nnewi, Anambra State. I started leasing Keke a little after November, 2013 in Anambra before expanding the business into Enugu State. I have learnt with years of experience that this line of work requires precision and record keeping. I give Keke for hire at various markup prices, depending on how long the driver is willing to pay, which could be between six, eight, ten and twelve months. If the potential driver is willing to pay for the tricycle on six months I would give the Keke at a relatively lower markup of 78% markup. I have always made sure that my contractual terms remain fair to the prospective buyers although I have faced numerous issues while working with some of them. Some of these drivers were very dishonest and displayed unethical behaviors. For instance, as per hire purchase terms, drivers are expected to remit weekly or monthly amounts. However some drivers devised subtle means to try to cheat me. They seldom remit the amount as our agreement state. They would come up with flimsy excuses that they did not make much money for the week and that the tricycles given was constantly breaking down. I would try to understand them by letting them know that they can pay me the amount they owe in subsequent weeks (although the contract does not account for this). But their schemes are cleverly orchestrated and in the subsequent weeks would fabricate other excuses for defaulting. To worsen the whole matter, most of them do not take proper care of the tricycles given them. They ride unethically and end up destroying the tricycle. Some after making these excuses and destroying the tricycle would come back to terminate the contract, thereby carting away with the amounts that they made and on the downside leave me with a destroyed vehicle, with reduced value. For subsequent persons that would come to enter contracts, I would be forced to reduce tremendously the total price of the Keke. This is a major loss" (Personal communication, July 6, 2025).



Fig 3. A tricycle garage in Nike Lake resort road, Enugu State.

To contradict a little the accounts of Mr. C. I, a driver had to recount a first-hand issue one of his friends encountered while on a hire purchase contract.

"One of my friends signed a hire purchase contract in 2009. I started the transport business before him. I introduced him into the business because he had nothing doing at the time and needed a source of income to provide for himself because he was yet to be married. He had no money to purchase his own tricycle so I advised him to go into a rental system. He agreed. I cannot remember much of the details of his agreements but he signed a good enough deal to finish his payments in twelve months. He, my friend was very dedicated in his weekly payments. Inasmuch as it was quite difficult most of the times, he made sure to keep his bargain. Unbeknownst to him, his rental organizer had somethings under his

sleeves. In the Tenth month of his payments, the hire purchase organizer instigated a problem. He complained that he, my friend was not keeping some of his own part of the agreement and that he was not taking adequate care of the tricycle given him. He mentioned that they were some undisclosed amount of money that my friend was not remitting so therefore he had to call off the contract and take back possession of his tricycle. It sounded strange. My friend asked which agreement he had faltered in and the organizer mentioned somethings like service fee and the fact that he sold Keke at far less value than the amount he got it. Of course, that was not making any sense but the organizer, with his thugs collected the tricycle forcefully from him. My friend and I appealed this decision but at last, we were not successful. It turns out that the rental organizer was a very powerful man and owing to the fact that the legal system is unfortunately rigged against the common man, we had nothing to do. My friend was devastated as a result of this incident" (Personal communication, July 6, 2025).

From the above interview, it is evident that many rental organizers tend to create disputes late in the contract to reclaim the tricycle without completing the transfer of ownership by using thugs to scare off these drivers. As a newspaper report stated "despite the laws in Nigeria guiding hire purchase agreements, exploitation was still common" (Punch, 2024).

Some commuters making use of tricycles in various parts of Enugu revealed that part of the reasons why the price of transport was going up aside the price of fuel is due to the fact that so many of these drivers tend to make little on the business, therefore they resort to inflating the price of their services. These decisions are taken by Keke unions not minding the economic effect it would have on mobility. One commuter registered his frustrations more in a state of despair than anger. He said:

"Keke is the the best means of public transportation in Enugu. It has been reliable in conveying persons and goods from place to place. However overtime because this informal means of transport does not have competition, the union has always increased the price of movement. Most times, they do not have control of this increments because the cost of living affects them too. This affects mobility generally" (Personal communication, July 6, 2025).

The effects of unregulated Hire purchase of tricycles is evidently relational to all aspects of the economy in Enugu and beyond. As a result of the exploitative terms of the system, many drivers stay under harsh economic realities which would almost immediately affect cost of transportation for commuters in the state. Keke, though an informal mode of transport which developed unprecedentedly during the tenure of Governor Sullivan Chime, has served greatly as a huge alternative to mobility. The effect of unregulated rental terms has over the years served to undermine mobility and economic freedom.

8. Conclusion

This study examined the effects of hire purchase systems on the livelihoods of tricycle operators in Enugu State, Nigeria during the tenure of Governor Sullivan Chime, 2007-2015 with specific attention to the economic pressures experienced by drivers. Findings reveal that while hire purchase has provided an important alternative to tricycle acquisition and employment

opportunities for impoverished individuals, it also imposes extensive financial burdens due to outrageous contractual terms and exploitative interest rates.

The research portrayed that many drivers struggle with weekly remittances, often working under intense pressure to meet payment deadlines at the expense of personal welfare. Moreover, the lack of regulations and organized agreements has led to numerous disputes between hire purchase organizers and drivers, further making the system unworkable.

While hire purchase provides potential for economic empowerment, in fact it establishes economic ditches for Keke drivers. There is an imperative need for policy intervention and restructuring to ensure fairness and the destruction of exploitation.

9. Recommendations

In light of this research, the following recommendations have been made toward the major findings on exploitative terms of hire purchase of tricycles on peasant drivers:

1. Government regulations: the state government should impose stricter control of hire purchase systems to provide for the protection of both organizers and drivers and also the establishment of a hire purchase regulatory board to oversee all hire purchase agreements.
2. Transparent and Fair Contract Terms: Owners and financiers should ensure that all terms of the hire purchase agreement are presented in clear, unambiguous language. Drivers must be made fully aware of the total cost of the tricycle, payment schedules, penalties for default, and conditions for repossession.
3. Flexible Repayment Arrangements: Considering the fluctuating daily income of tricycle operators, repayment schedules should be made more flexible. Weekly or bi-weekly payments, alongside reasonable grace periods, would reduce default rates and promote smoother ownership transitions.

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Appendix: List of interviews cited in the Text

Table 1: Summary of interviews

Code	Interviewee/Role	Place	Date
Interview 1	Former Hire Purchase driver	Abakpa, Enugu	6/7/2025
Interview 2	Former Hire Purchase driver	New Haven, Enugu	6/13/2025
Interview 3	Hire Purchase organiser/garage owner	Abakpa, Enugu	6/7/2025
Interview 4	Friend of a Hire Purchase driver	Abakpa, Enugu	6/7/2025
Interview 5	Commuter	Ogui Road, Enugu	6/7/2025

Witnessing The Post-Post Office Era: Transport Agencies and Mail Mobilities in Cameroon

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Abstract

In Cameroon, the Post Office seems to be dead and gone in terms of local service delivery! This may not be a good statement to the hearing of the Minister of Post and Telecommunications but the reality now stares us in the face that since the liberalization of the transport sector, transport agencies have appropriated and now dominate the nationwide delivery of mails, freights and light goods which were previously the prerogative of the national postal service *Campost*. This paper is part of a project which investigates the role of Private Inter-Urban Transport Agencies in the movement of mails in the country. It questions their justifications, organization and visible impact as a solicited service delivery option for the average Cameroonian and questions other possibilities that this sector engenders. It is an on-going research project with preliminary findings indicating that apart from being an additional income generator to transport agencies whose main focus of operation is persons and their luggage, with regulation, it has potentials for job creation in local delivery, secretaryship and reception. The paper concludes that albeit risks involved, regulation is making the sector a significant contributor to local unemployment, transforming it rather from an alternative to a dominantly acceptable form of mail mobility as it fits into the needs and demands of the average person in the country.

Keywords: Mails, Mobilities, Transport Agencies, Postal Services, Cameroon

*Speaker

KABANZA TRANSPORT SYSTEM IN MALAWIAN CITIES: A PANACEA TO URBAN UNEMPLOYMENT AND MOBILITY OR A RISK AND CITY'S NUISANCE?

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Abstract

This paper would like to think about urban accessibility, mobility, sustainability and survival in Malawian cities by exploring and investigating one of the popular means of urban transport locally called *Kabanza*. *Kabanza* comprises of bicycles and motorcycles which commute passengers to various destinations within the cities and urban spaces of Malawi. The phenomenon of *Kabanza* in Malawian cities is in fact a recent one. Indeed, bicycles as John McCracken noted in his pioneering history of bicycles in colonial Malawi were largely owned by Europeans. Later Africans or Malawians began using them. Again, migrant workers returning from South Africa and Bulawayo made savings to buy bicycles as status symbols in their communities. However, even then bicycles remained scarce commodities owned by only a small proportion of population mostly male. The story above is quite contrast to contemporary life in urban centres of Malawi when post-1994 witnessed bicycles and motorbikes colonising the streets of the major cities in Malawi and their ownership no longer a status symbol. While their increased presence in the cities is attributed to rising costs of conventional transport, absence of reliable public transport systems for example metro trains and conveniently reliable to beat city traffic jams, they are also perceived as a convenient source of employment to the multitude of unemployed urban youths and urban poor at the margins of precarious urban life as means of survival. However, the recent increased concerns of road accidents with subsequent injuries and deaths attributed to *Kabanza* questions are raised as to whether *Kabanza* are a solution to city transport and urban unemployment in Malawi. This paper therefore seeks to explore this conundrum of city survival and risk in Malawi through *Kabanza*.

Keywords: Kabanza, bicycles, cities, urban, unemployment, Mzuzu

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Wheels of Change in Commuting Transport Environment: Wheelbarrows and Markets Accessibility in Owerri Urban Markets in Southeastern Nigeria

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Abstract

Owerri is an important urban centre in Southeast Nigeria linking major commercial routes of Aba and Onitsha and primarily dominated by para transit system of buses, cars, Lorries among others. There are markets in the city where goods are purchased by residents and non-residents. In these markets where grains, legumes, tuber products, flour, livestock and animal products, stationaries, textile, household needs among others are sold, lacks adequate road infrastructures for motorised movements in and out of them, highlighting the need for non-motorized transport system. While scholars have published on markets and aspects of mobility technology in the markets, (Ukwu, 1967:647-662; Lewis, 1994:453-475; Flanary & Dennis, 2005:1-9; Mathies, 1991; Elliott, 2006), they are insufficient to highlight mobility challenges in markets in Owerri. Wheelbarrows provides alternative non-motorized transport in moving goods from the markets to the major roads thus, reducing traffic associated with motorized transport system. This study therefore explores the significance of wheelbarrows as an alternative mobility solution in Owerri marketplaces, where poor road infrastructure and congested urban environments hinder motorized transport. Wheelbarrows have emerged as a vital means of conveying goods, facilitating trade, and supporting livelihoods. This paper further highlights the experiences of market women, traders, and wheelbarrow operators who rely on this mode of transport. In tune with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Climate Action, Sustainable Cities and Communities, the study investigates the economic, social and environmental benefits of wheelbarrow use, as well as the challenges faced by those involved. The findings underscore the importance of recognizing and supporting informal transport systems, like wheelbarrows, in urban planning and development initiatives. It contributes to a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics of mobility, trade, and the peasant challenges as well as the processes of wheelbarrow acquisition under capitalist dictates as a means of livelihoods in Owerri marketplaces in particular and Nigeria, in general.

Keywords: Wheelbarrows, alternative mobility, Owerri Markets, informal transport, Urban planning, Climate Action, Sustainable Cities and Communities

*Speaker

Reading, enacting, and prospecting alternative mobilities: cities, narratives, materialities

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Abstract

Abstract of the session:

Urban mobilities are conveyed through discourses, texts, and narratives of various kinds. Saliently, there is always an implied agency of materials, objects, and things that interact with textualisation and narrativisation processes. The city can therefore also be seen as a rich interweaving of textual forms, which compose and animate an extremely articulated communicative fabric that contributes to shaping mobilities in the past, present, and future. This session revolves around various forms of alternative mobilities, namely pedestrian mobility, homeless mobilities, elderly e-mobility and tram transport, considering cities as communication environments, material semantic containers, sets of signs and objects that co-produce meaning, have symbolic and performative powers. To investigate the connections between cities, narratives and materialities with reference to alternative mobilities, plural approaches are necessary, both from a theoretical and methodological point of view. The session includes presentations by members and visiting scholars of the Centre for advanced studies in Mobility & Humanities of the University of Padua (MoHu), showing how the intersection of humanistic perspectives and work on multiple case studies can contribute to experiencing and interpreting alternative mobilities from experimental transdisciplinary angles across history, sociology, design, geosemiotics and cultural geography.

Chair of the session: **Tania Rossetto - University of Padova**

This is a thematic panel with 4 presentations and Q&A session

List of papers of the session:

Simone Fari - University of Granada - Walking the talk: the power of storytelling and rhetoric in shaping pedestrian mobility policies

Ole B. Jensen - Aalborg University - Alternative readings of mobility exclusion: how "unwanted" mobile subjectivities are materially dismissed by artefacts in urban space

Francesco Zuccolo, Giuseppe Tomasella - University of Padova - The "scooter grandpa" stereotype: representations of elderly e-mobility in music videos and their exclusionary narratives

*Speaker

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Tania Rossetto, Giada Peterle - University of Padova - Waiting for alternative mobility infrastructures: methodological proposals to explore construction sites as dense spaces

Keywords: urban mobilities, mobility humanities, narratives, materialities, methodologies

Waiting for alternative mobility infrastructures: methodological proposals to explore construction sites as dense spaces

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Abstract

Construction sites are types of spaces that we commonly experience in cities. However, construction sites are also "dense" spaces, as they are territories subject to negotiations, places of individual and collective experience, landscapes that incorporate texts into their textures. This occurs even more conspicuously when the construction sites involve building infrastructures for public and sustainable alternative mobility. As infrastructures are often charged with symbolic meanings and expectations, construction sites represent the urban stage where these promises are narrativised. This paper proposes a geocultural methodological approach to feel, enact and interpret building processes within urban dynamics. Various methodologies are described such as field explorations, photo walks, auto-ethnographies and interviews of the actors involved. Becoming narrative infrastructures themselves, construction sites emit texts that can be analyzed from a semiotic and discursive point of view. As their materialities organise stories, they become exhibition surfaces to narrate urban transformation. These narratives may emerge from institutional strategies of cultural mitigation or artistic and activist appropriations, but can also lead to phenomena of commodification, aestheticization and spectacularization. In other cases, they can make alternative stories of expected and desired mobilities visible. A key aspect, then, is considering construction sites as "non-human actors" with their own agency, life and ability to act on the city. Main case studies will be the construction sites of new tramway lines in Padova and Bologna, Italy.

Keywords: construction sites, mobility infrastructures, urban cultural geographies, photowalks

*Speaker

Walking the Talk: The Power of Storytelling and Rhetoric in Shaping Pedestrian Mobility Policies

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Abstract

This paper investigates how rhetoric and storytelling by advocacy groups, NGOs, and political networks have significantly shaped pedestrian mobility policies in urban contexts. It argues that beyond technical data and infrastructure projects, persuasive narratives and strategic communication play crucial roles in advancing the walkability agenda. By analyzing texts, websites, manifestos, and events organized by key actors such as Walk21 and similar initiatives, the study explores how these entities effectively frame walking not merely as leisure but as a fundamental mode of urban transportation. Case studies, notably the city of Pontevedra, illustrate how compelling narratives surrounding pedestrian mobility have translated into concrete policy outcomes, drastically reducing car dependency and enhancing urban livability. The research underscores the importance of examining the discursive practices employed by mobility advocates, highlighting their capacity to redefine urban priorities and foster transformative change.

Keywords: Walkability, Rethoric, Discourse, Pedestrian Mobility, Micromobility

*Speaker

Alternative Readings of Mobility Exclusion - how "unwanted" mobile subjectivities are materially dismissed by artefacts in urban space

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Abstract

This paper presents the theoretical concept of "material interpellation" to show how people in homelessness are "pushed" out of public spaces. This group of citizens "live in the network" of city spaces. This means that their "home" is distributed to different coordinates (sleeping in one place and socializing in another). These habitations and mobilities are targeted by urban stakeholders with exclusionary interventions such as spikes, leaning benches, and "armrests" all pushing this group of people out of public space. The process of "material interpellation" is one by which the people in homelessness experience how material space "announce" (interpellation) them as "unwanted". These alternative announcements create new patterns of mobilities and inhabitation by people in homelessness. The paper draws on a recently finalized four-year long research project based on mobile ethnography.

Keywords: Alternative readings, Material Interpellation, Mobility Exclusion

^{*}Speaker

The "scooter grandpa" stereotype: representations of elderly e-mobility in music videos and their exclusionary narratives

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Abstract

Recognising the importance of straightforward communication about alternative mobilities, this study analyses representations of elderly e-mobility in two music videos: MOX's "Fino a quando il cielo esiste" and Avicii's "Waiting for Love". While e-mobility is frequently marketed as inclusive, mainstream media often trivialises its representations, obscuring crucial mobility justice implications. The study explores how these music videos erase the material barriers facing elderly e-riders, thereby silencing their voices and reducing them to subaltern participants in mobility discourses. The analysis addresses two problematic representational styles. First, MOX's use of youth in prosthetic old-age make-up creates a mocking parody that reflects societal anxiety about ageing, failing to engage meaningfully with alternative mobility's transformative potential. Second, Avicii's romanticised scooter journey – though uplifting – depoliticises elderly e-mobility by framing it as an individual quest rather than a collective mobility justice issue. Employing an object-oriented approach, the study makes two key interventions. Through the lenses of subaltern studies and mobility justice, it exposes how green mobility rhetoric perpetuates exclusion by neglecting diverse community needs. Simultaneously, a more-than-human perspective examines the symbolic functions of narratives entangling ageing bodies with e-scooters in visual representations of alternative mobilities. The conclusion advocates for temporal equity in urban mobility planning since it may inspire the emergence of infrastructures that support alternative mobilities by accommodating slowness, fragility, and interdependence.

Keywords: Elderly e, mobility, mobility justice, temporal equity, ageing representations, more-than, human mobility

^{*}Speaker

The path to investing 10% of National Government annual transport budgets in active travel in all UNFCCC countries during the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Transport (2026-2035)

Sam Johnson*¹

¹World Bank Group / TUE – United States

Abstract

ABSTRACT:

The forthcoming United Nations Decade of Sustainable Transport (2026-2035) presents a pivotal opportunity for national governments to reimagine their transport investment strategies. This research advocates for a transformative shift in funding priorities. The study imagines a path by which all 197 UNFCCC countries allocate up to 10% of their national annual transport budgets to active mobility, encompassing walking, cycling, and other non-motorized transport modes.

The research aims to address critical questions, including the specific financial commitments required from each country to meet this 10% investment target annually throughout the decade. It also evaluates the economic benefits and carbon reduction potential of such investments, particularly if they enable populations to meet the World Health Organization's daily physical activity recommendations through active mobility.

Furthermore, the study provides technical guidance on developing national policy frameworks and funding mechanisms to effectively channel these investments into active travel projects. It also explores the role of Overseas Development Assistance, including multilateral climate funds and development banks, in co-financing these national initiatives.

The full research, anticipated to be released on World Sustainable Transport Day (November 26, 2025), includes a visually compelling report, an interactive webpage, and engaging social media materials designed to stimulate global policy discussions and encourage national governments to commit to a more ambitious investment strategy. By fostering a global shift towards active mobility, this research aims to contribute to more sustainable, equitable, and health-promoting transport systems worldwide.

This proposal aligns with the T2M 2025 conference theme of "Mobility Alternatives – Alternative Mobilities," challenging the dominance of automobility and advocating for a paradigm shift towards more inclusive and sustainable mobility practices.

BIO:

*Speaker

Sam Johnson is a Sustainable Transport Specialist with the World Bank, and Visiting Researcher at the Technical University of Eindhoven focusing on innovation and socio-technical transitions towards a more sustainable society. He has worked in transport infrastructure advisory (roads, maritime, aviation) planning, design, construction, maintenance and financing for the World Bank with many national governments over the last 8 years. He co-leads World Bank's Active Mobility Community of Practitioners. He has a Bachelor of Engineering (Civil) (Hons1), Graduate Diploma in Sustainable Development and Humanitarian Action, and a Masters of Global Development Practice at Harvard University. Sam is a strong advocate for people-centric urban design and moving away from car-dependency for more fun, vibrant, equitable, affordable, healthy, and green cities.

Keywords: Active Mobility, National Government Investment, UNFCCC, Economic Benefits, Policy Frameworks, Funding Mechanisms, Overseas Development Assistance

The Value(s) of Ownership in Energy-Mobility-Housing Sustainability Transitions: Literature Review & Assessment Framework

Authors

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Questions to readers and audience at T2M Alternative Mobility Conference

We welcome feedback on our paper and would, additionally, appreciate to hear your thoughts on the following question:

Our systematic literature review and ownership assessment framework represent work in progress. In the meantime, we are exploring research cases and preparing empirical work to research alternative ownership forms and cross-sectoral innovations within mobility transitions. Think of an apartment complex where tenants have access to communal electric vehicles charged by solar panels on the roof; energy cooperatives providing shared mobility; and public-private partnerships to extend public transport concessions with automative electric shuttles. In these initiatives, who owns the technologies and infrastructures, and what does (hybrid, public, private, and/or cooperative) ownership mean for sustainability outcomes, shared responsibilities, benefits and burdens, and the rights and needs of residents and users? How can our conceptual work support the practical questions within such research cases? Get in touch via e.m.boersma@uu.nl.

Abstract

Ownership is a fundamental yet underexplored dimension of sustainability transitions. It shapes who makes decisions, carries responsibilities, and benefits from innovations and infrastructures—issues increasingly central to justice and climate debates. While sustainability transitions scholarship has examined governance, institutions, and social practices, ownership has only been addressed minimally, and often in fragmented or normatively loaded ways. This paper develops a conceptual lens on ownership by systematically reviewing recent literature on ownership and sustainability in three sectors with key societal functions: energy, mobility, and housing. Building on public values theory and value pluralism, we map how different ownership forms can embody and mediate sustainability-related values, such as sustainability, affordability, autonomy, and equity, and how these values can generate tensions and trade-offs in transitions. Our analysis reveals that ownership structures are not inherently just or unjust, effective or ineffective; instead, they reflect context-dependent strengths, weaknesses, and value conflicts. By disentangling normative assumptions from legal characteristics, we propose a foundation for an ownership assessment framework that clarifies governance dilemmas and supports more reflexive debates on just sustainability transitions.

This conceptual work is at the disposal of organizational, political, social, and economic academic questions and issues within sustainability transitions. As well as at the disposal of ongoing empirical research on mobility alternatives within the [Justnexus research project](#). Research cases we look at include energy cooperatives providing shared electric mobility in a rural area, and public-private partnerships to provide an automative electric shuttle for migrant workers in an industry area.

Keywords: Ownership; Sustainability transitions; Public values; Justice

An introduction to the political epistemology of transport governance

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Abstract

In Western government contexts, the decision-making process is often associated with the use of various scientific techniques to predict the outcomes of specific interventions. The discipline that promotes the same attitude towards the transport sector is often called transport science. It consists of the mathematical theory of traffic flows and neoclassical transport economics. Many officials share the same epistemic property with transport scientists, in the way that they are eager to rely on various predictions as a guide to "rational" decision-making. A contemporary practical implementation for this vision suggests not only software, but also the infrastructure of data collection, skilled labour, as well as stable budgeting and demand for such knowledge by the government. This system of knowledge production appears to be extremely resourceful, and the split between the narrative of "evidence-based" management and empirically observable decisionism becomes very apparent. Local governance regimes therefore maintain their own knowledge without much reliance on modelling and forecasting. This knowledge remains hidden in contemporary debates about the pressing issues in transport, but seems to be a valuable source of alternative thinking about the same issues.

Keywords: political epistemology, transport governance, transportation science

*Speaker

Daring to Deviate

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Abstract

On March 26, 2025, the municipality of Renkum adopted its renewed Mobility Vision for 2040, replacing the 2010 Municipal Traffic and Transport Plan. This vision marks a shift from a traditional, traffic-engineering approach to a people-centered, sustainable mobility strategy. Developed entirely in-house, the new policy aims not only to improve accessibility but also to enhance the well-being of residents, strengthen the physical environment, and promote sustainable transport solutions. Collaboration with residents, businesses, interest groups, and knowledge institutions is emphasized in a collective search for effective, tailored solutions.

Renkum's vision centers around two key principles:

- Every child should be able to go to school independently from the age of 8.
- Everyone deserves the opportunity to grow old with dignity in the municipality.

The policy prioritizes people before the traffic system, recognizing a clear connection between well-being, the living environment, and transportation. Traffic and road safety are seen as issues deeply tied to people's lives, not just technical matters. Encouraging car ownership conflicts with viewing streets as shared spaces, where demand for space is growing for activities such as walking, cycling, and playing in a green, water-retentive, and heat-resistant environment to support health, fitness, and social interaction. Target groups with transportation challenges, like schoolchildren and people with disabilities, are often overlooked when streets are viewed only as functional connections.

The policy represents a collaborative effort, with input from residents, businesses, stakeholders, and scientists through surveys, workshops, and discussions. Moving forward, the municipality will continue to strengthen this approach, fostering close collaboration with the community and other governments. "The change in mobility is exciting; we dare to deviate from traditional guidelines, learn from practice, and discover together what works."

Scientific contribution:

1. Paradigm Shift in Mobility Planning

Contribution: It offers a real-world case of transitioning from a car-centric, traffic-engineering paradigm to a people-first, well-being-oriented mobility policy.

Scientific relevance: Urban and mobility researchers increasingly call for such transitions, but real-world examples are still limited. Renkum's case offers an opportunity to study the

*Speaker

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implementation, outcomes, and challenges of such a shift.

2. Embedding Equity and Inclusion in Transport Policy

Contribution: The policy foregrounds vulnerable groups, particularly children and the elderly, as central design anchors.

Scientific relevance: This could contribute to research on transport justice and inclusive design, demonstrating how mobility systems can be restructured to promote intergenerational equity and accessibility.

3. Participatory Governance Model

Contribution: The planning process involved residents, businesses, knowledge institutions, and interest groups collaboratively.

Scientific relevance: The case can contribute to literature on participatory planning, deliberative democracy, and co-creation in policy-making, offering data on how such approaches affect policy legitimacy, efficacy, and innovation.

4. Human-Centered Metrics in Transportation

Contribution: Instead of traditional metrics like congestion or travel time, the focus is on well-being, dignity, and independent mobility.

Scientific relevance: This aligns with emerging frameworks like the 15-minute city or transport for health, and provides empirical grounding for developing and validating new indicators of mobility success.

5. Sustainability and Climate Adaptation in Urban Design

Contribution: The plan integrates green, heat-resistant, and water-retentive streets as part of the mobility landscape.

Scientific relevance: This intersection of transportation planning and climate adaptation is a growing research frontier, and Renkum's integrated approach could serve as a model or case study.

6. Policy Innovation and Institutional Learning

Contribution: Renkum's willingness to "dare to deviate" suggests a form of adaptive governance that embraces experimentation and learning.

Scientific relevance: This is a notable example of institutional innovation in local governance, relevant to scholars studying policy agility, resilience, and governance under uncertainty.

7. Data and Methodology for Community Engagement

Contribution: The use of surveys, workshops, and discussions in shaping the vision is part of our approach.

Scientific relevance: These methods and their outcomes could be studied and documented as a model for evidence-informed, community-led urban planning.

Keywords: people, centered, sustainable mobility strategy, deviating from traditional guidelines

A just transition for intermediate transport in Sub-Saharan African cities: competing technologies and priorities

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Abstract

Large fleets of minibuses, small buses and sedan vehicles have for decades dominated mass transport in Sub-Saharan African cities. Motorcycle and three-wheeler taxis are catching up, complementing or competing with four-wheeled services, or in certain cities are the sole form of shared mass transport. In both instances, ownership and decision-making are highly fragmented.

Mass transport improvement efforts in the region have focussed primarily on bus rapid transit (BRT) and vehicle electrification. BRT has not made major inroads: the niche it targets is already occupied. Electrification has arguably gained more traction, mostly amongst motorcycles readily supplied new from South and East Asia. By contrast, the four-wheel market is saturated by used internal-combustion vehicles exported from Europe, Japan and elsewhere.

In this context, it is important to ask what a just transition is. Sub-Saharan Africa's cumulative historic contribution to global CO₂ emissions from fossil fuel sources is estimated to be only 1.9%(1). The need for basic (motorised) mobility will continue to grow as urbanisation and urban sprawl continue, and local air pollution will consequently remain a persistent health issue. Operators are driven by profit and not emissions reduction, while governments have a limited set of levers to stimulate large-scale change.

In this paper, we will reflect on responses to the just transition question from the perspective of Dakar, Accra and Lomé. In each city, the above-mentioned technologies meet with intermediate transport in different configurations. Ultimately we aim to illustrate how the transition for intermediate transport in these cities is as dependent on local action to improve and integrate their businesses and operations as it is on changing established global technology supply chains.

This abstract is submitted for consideration as part of the session proposal entitled "The Missing Link? Intermediate Modes in Mobility Transition Frameworks."

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(1) Data for 1750 to 2021, sourced from the Global Carbon Project. See, Ritchie, H, 2023. Sub-Saharan Africa emits a tiny fraction of the world's CO2. Energy for Growth Hub, <https://tinyurl.com/4kz7n55u>.

Keywords: Intermediate modes, integration, improvement, just transition, Sub, Saharan Africa

On-demand services in Germany: lost in projectitis

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Abstract

On-demand services complementing higher-capacity modes look back at a long history in Germany: dial-a-ride offers, integration of taxi options into public transport tariffs and community buses have been around for decades, often as transportation of last resort in rural and suburban areas. Digitalisation has prompted a plethora of app-based microtransit schemes, either integrated into pre-existent transport systems or as free market start-ups. Particularly, citizens and public authorities in rural and shrinking areas have come to believe the promise of on-demand and low-capacity modes, to the detriment of "classical" solutions. The late 2010s have seen an upsurge in public funding for microtransit trials, living labs, experiments, test runs and implementation projects throughout the country, cherishing the hope of efficient and low-cost solution for low-ridership areas that made diesel buses seem outdated for local actors. Trial-oriented research and development funding streams from a large variety of innovation-focused federal and regional sources have often proved as the only way for ailing transport authorities to implement better service – or at least to pretend some activity in that directions. Follow-up budgets for transitioning trials to regular operation have been hard to find, leading closures of microtransit offers once project funding terminated, consequently spreading disillusionment among transport authorities and passengers alike. And still, the project logic lingers on, repeatedly reinventing the wheel, all while resisting knowledge consolidation and substantial changes in funding priorities.

Based on interviews with transport officials, planning documents, media reports, and a countrywide database of microtransit services, the presentation traces the aspirations and shattered hopes associated with on-demand services, and showcases spatial inequalities on a national scale, as well as a regional close-up on the federal state of Saxony.

—> Request to join the session " The Missing Link? Intermediate Modes in Mobility Transition Frameworks "

Keywords: public transport, on demand, microtransit, rural areas

*Speaker

Intermediate modes in the digital era: Rethinking regulation in a changing mobility landscape

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Abstract

“Intermediate modes” – transport options that blend features of private cars and public transit – represent promising alternatives to individual motorization across a variety of urban contexts. Despite their long-standing presence, especially in cities of the Global South, these modes have rarely been the subject of systematic analysis. The ongoing digital transformation of these services offers new opportunities to reassess their evolving roles and potential to contribute to more sustainable and resilient mobility systems.

First, the paper draws on data from the Worldwide Observatory of Shared Mobility Digital Platforms (WOSP) to track the global expansion of app-based shared mobility services between 2019 and 2025. It identifies key trends in the development of these platforms in cities of both the Global North and the Global South.

Second, building on selected case studies from the WOSP, the paper further explores the diverse regulatory challenges that digitally-enhanced intermediate modes pose to public authorities at different government levels and in varied urban contexts.

Panel session: The Missing Link? Intermediate Modes in Mobility Transition Frameworks

Keywords: intermediate modes, multimodality, regulation, governance

*Speaker

Scaling public transport beyond city centers: the role of express carpooling lines in complementing BRT networks

Thomas Matagne, Harald Confé Piquer, Marine Bruno

Introduction: towards a mobility transition for all territories

Context and motivation

The climate imperative makes mobility transition non-negotiable. In the European Union, the transport sector is one of the largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions and the sector has shown little progress in recent decades.

Among the various modes of transport, road transport is responsible for most of the sector's emissions, with the private car accounting for over 60%¹.

This situation is mainly related to a phenomenon of individual car dependency affecting all EU countries in significant proportions and which translates into a high level of motorisation in the EU-27².

There is a widespread belief that motorists choose to drive out of habit, comfort or a desire for social recognition. It is not the case for most EU citizens. Car dependency in the European Union is in fact massively linked to a lack of quality alternative supply, sufficiently extensive to cover all mobility needs. In fact, The European Commission estimates that 129 million European citizens live in areas with inadequate access to public transport services. It represents 30% of the EU population.

Yet, existing frameworks and investments are still heavily focused on urban cores where collective transport systems already work relatively well.

In dense urban areas, transport systems are successful because they combine several key factors. They benefit from sufficient passenger demand, which makes it possible to offer high service frequency. They also rely on redundancy and multimodal integration, which ensure both reliability and frequent service. Shared physical infrastructure plays an important role as well, as it reduces the space available for private cars and speeds up collective transport modes. Finally, interoperability and modularity enable seamless connections across the network, making the entire system more efficient and accessible.

However, outside of urban settings, because of the widespread use of individual cars, flows are weaker and more dispersed, making high-frequency services economically and ecologically irrelevant : traditional transit modes struggle to replicate at scale, trapped in a vicious cycle of low demand leading to low frequency, which in turn discourages ridership. Infrastructure in these areas is therefore designed primarily around the car, optimized for individual, door-to-door travel rather than shared stops or smooth modal connections.

¹European Environmental Agency, *Greenhouse gas emissions from transport in Europe*, 2024.

²European Environmental Agency, *Passenger car ownership in Europe*, 2019.

Walking to the bus: Comparative journeys of young male peer researchers in South Africa and the United Kingdom

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Abstract

This paper brings together results of two recent comparative studies employing an innovative peer research methodology to investigate walking experiences of young men (18-35 yr) in the context of low-income neighbourhoods in cities across the global North (UK) and South (South Africa). The studies span neighbourhoods in large urban areas of London and Cape Town to those in 'secondary' cities situated in outlying counties/provinces that while smaller and more compact than their metropolitan counterparts are sites of population growth often lacking dense public transport networks. Reliance on walking in such cities may be even greater for young men. While knowledge of young women's walking experiences has developed steadily over the past decade, young men's walking journeys have been largely ignored. These studies seek to address this gap. Informed by literatures at the intersection of gender and everyday urban mobility practices, both studies are driven by an innovative peer research methodology emerging as a collaborative process of listening, co-creating and sharing knowledge about pedestrian mobilities of young men, mediated by the precarities of urban life. The method helps to unlock evidence of the embodied and social experiences of walking and writing research from the perspective of individuals who are experts in their own lives. Findings from both large metropolitan cities and smaller secondary cities bring to light young men's experiences of navigating social, environmental and infrastructural challenges while also highlighting their positive aspects. Across the study sites young men employ a range of tactics and strategies to ensure safe journeys while also recognising the potential value of safe walking for mental health and well-being. Together these studies help not only to highlight the challenges and opportunities inherent in walking, but also demonstrate how walking might contribute as a mode of transport with more equitable access and sustainability.

Keywords: Peer research, walking, gender, young men, South Africa, United Kingdom

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Walking as mobility of care in a Mexico City's peripheral area. Opportunities and inequalities.

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Abstract.

This paper focuses on the pedestrian care mobilities of inhabitants from low-income neighborhoods located on the periphery of Mexico City. The study highlights the essential role of these mobilities in constructing the neighborhood as a social space, where residents find and create resources to sustain their lives. Walking practices intersect with a wide range of other activities such as street vending, neighborhood politics, and the maintenance of local social relationships. Walking routines thus foster connections among residents and contribute to the building of a local "social infrastructure." However, walking is an activity shaped by significant inequalities. Security issues make walking conditions particularly difficult in these areas, requiring the development of place-based knowledge and adaptive skills. Drawing on ethnographic research involving in-depth interviews, mental maps, and pedestrian journeys with residents, the paper explores the tactics and strategies employed by female residents in the activity of dwelling, through their everyday walking practices.

Mobility as capacity: Identifying informal mobilities through the lens of gender

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²The Hong Kong Polytechnic University [Hong Kong] – China

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Abstract

While mobility may be considered a fundamental human right, it is intertwined with elements that extend beyond mere understanding of transportation and space, highlighting various kinds of exclusions and denied access to resources at different scales (Sheller and Urry, 2006). By adopting new technologies, such as GPS, along with mobile ethnography, this research centres around daily mobilities of urban marginalized women (UMW) from peri-urban areas of New Delhi who contest their right to mobility due to socio-cultural and spatial exclusions. The main research question that guides this study is: What are the consequences of the relationship between social and spatial mobility of UMW? Specifically, how does the urban infrastructure adapt to facilitate the mobility of UMW?

This research takes departure from Vincent Kaufmann's concept of Motility (Kaufmann et al., 2004), defined as a new form of inequality that is a result of the relationship between spatial and social mobility, and is an asset (Kaufmann et al., 2004). This empirical study reveals that the socio-spatial infrastructure act upon and impact the mobility of UMW. This paper presents insights into alternative mobility systems that take place outside the periphery of the formal systems of mobility. These are informal systems that transform the structured services of mobility / city infrastructure into flexible and negotiable arrangements offering UMW additional options of mobility to consider. In the absence of inclusive travel options, these temporal adaptations of the urban infrastructure act to enhance the mobility of UMW for more just and equitable mobilities. The study's main contribution to knowledge is to identify and recognise alternate mobility arrangements emerging from considering mobility of UMW as a capacity.

Short Bio of Authors

Krity Gera is an architect, designer and researcher whose research and practice centres around urban mobility transitions focusing on marginalised communities. She currently holds the position of Assistant Professor at Royal College of Art, London.

Peter Hasdell is an architect, urbanist and academic. He is Professor at the School of Design, The Hong Kong PolyU. He currently directs In-situ Project, a research by design platform focusing on sustainable development and social design.

Gerhard Bruyns an architect and urbanist. He is Associate Professor at the School of Design

^{*}Speaker

at The Hong Kong PolyU. His research deals with the aspects of spatial morphology and its impact on the formal expression of the city. Diego Sepulveda-Carmona is a designer and a regional planner and currently holds the position of Assistant Professor at TU Delft. His main research topics are strategies to integrate the development of marginalised areas into metropolisation processes.

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Keywords: Mobility justice, Socio spatial integration, Mobility as capacity, Gendered mobilities

Uncovering hidden mobility inequities: Exploring intersectionality in mobility equity barriers

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Abstract

The intersection of mobility and social justice has drawn increasing attention, particularly as urban crises continue to entrench power structures embedded in government policies, car-centric planning cultures, and spatial development patterns. These crises have highlighted distributive injustices, such as urban sprawl and hidden mobility inequalities, reinforcing social hierarchies and social inequality growth. In this context, questions have emerged about whether mobility planning frameworks—often focused on infrastructure provision and efficiency—are adequate for addressing systemic mobility inequalities. As Sheller (2018) argues, mobility systems are embedded in broader structures of power that privilege dominant identities—typically white, male, able-bodied, and middle-upper class—while marginalizing others' mobility experiences and reinforcing histories of patriarchy, colonialism, racism, sexism, and ableism.

Drawing on intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991) and mobility justice (Sheller, 2018), the study critiques the continued use of one-size-fits-all approaches and the reliance on homogenized categories in mobility research and planning by investigating how co-constituted identities—such as sex, class, age, and migration status—intersect to shape individuals' experiences of mobility behavior, safety, and socio-spatial exclusion.

The study uses data from the 2021 Urban Development Survey in Munich, which includes responses from approximately 7,000 individuals, to conduct quantitative analysis through associations and regressions. The results show that single-category analysis—such as comparing sex (female and male) in isolation from other categories like age, class, or migration status and their variables—fails to capture the full extent of mobility inequities. When multiple categories are intersected, the results drastically change, uncovering patterns of privilege and disadvantage embedded in mobility systems. Therefore, this study advocates for breaking the barrier to traditional quantitative analysis by integrating intersectional methods to better reflect the complexity of lived experiences and discuss the perpetuation of homogeneity of categories in study mobility to contribute to more equitable and engaged cities.

Keywords: mobility justice, intersectionality, co, constituted identities, mobility equity, disaggregated data

*Speaker

Beyond Consensus: Embracing Conflict in Street Space Transformations

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Abstract

Reallocating street space away from private car dominance to other modes of transport and other public uses, Street Space Transformation (SST) is an increasingly used strategy among contemporary cities striving for a transition towards sustainable mobility and healthy urban living. During the planning of SSTs conflicts frequently arise, not only because their proposed technical and spatial interventions often create tension over how road space is used, but also due to ongoing debates over the social reconstruction of streets marked by diverging values among stakeholders and changing behavior in the larger mobility context. Due to its conflictual nature, SST has become a planning dilemma that unsettles the consensus-seeking planning approach, in which conflicts are often deemed as negative factors and need to be minimized. In this paper, we propose a framework to analyze and comprehend conflicts in the urban planning of SST. It articulates the potential of engaging conflicts not as an opposing force but as a form of self-organized participation that can drive urban transitions. Based on an integrative literature review, this paper first identifies different types of conflict that occur and manifest in the four phases of an SST project (plan/policy, design, implementation, and function) and the stakeholders involved. Then, we use two case studies to explore and illustrate the manner in which specific conflicts between different stakeholders emerge and manifest in the planning process and how the conflicts affect the design and function of street spaces.

Keywords: Conflict, Planning Process, Participation, Street space Transformation, Sustainable Mobility

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Advancing just mobility transitions through community organizing

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Abstract

Present day mobility systems are unjust and unsustainable (Boehm et al., 2022; Sheller, 2018). They are dominated by a regime that sees commodification and market forces as the primary creation of societal welfare (Loorbach et al., 2021). The underlying culture is founded in individualist values of freedom, safety, and cocooning (Wells & Xenias, 2015). Sustainable mobility innovations have all too often optimized this regime rather than challenge its underlying structures and values (Gössling & Cohen, 2014). However, from a transitions research perspective, regimes are always contested. In the civil domain a variety of challenges and alternatives are being developed. Drawing on 3 empirical cases from 4 years of PhD research, this paper argues that community initiatives have 1) underexplored transformative potential and 2) important capacities for transition governance.

A first illustration of this entrenched regime and the ways communities have attempted to transform it comes from an analysis of the Amelisweerd social movement. As a fifty-year mobilization to protect a forest estate from highway construction, this movement demonstrates how communities can not only resist policy but also develop their own knowledge & alternatives and establish coalitions of activists and policymakers. Second, we discuss Dutch shared mobility cooperatives and their transformative potential for steering the mobility transition towards mobility commons (Nikolaeva et al., 2019). These initiatives further highlight community-built autonomous spaces and the complexity of public-civic cooperation. Finally, stepping out of the Dutch context, we describe how transition management approaches have attempted to support the development of urban mobility & housing commons in Oslo, Norway.

By drawing on a broad set of empirical work we thoroughly analyze the underdiscussed topic of community organizing for just mobility transitions. We highlight especially the capacities of social movements for transition governance, the transformative potential of mobility commons, and the need for better public-civic cooperation.

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Keywords: community, commons, governance, justice, transitions, activism

Defining modal shear: A conceptual framework revealing hidden inequities within mobility spaces

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Abstract

The electrification of human-sized mobility (HSM) alternatives, such as e-bikes and e-scooters, has increased the diversity of vehicle speeds, weights, sizes, and users within transport spaces, changing interactions within active mobility spaces and roads. New tensions within these spaces suggest that existing modal segregation practices and policies should be reconsidered beyond simply addressing the marginalisation of some existing users. Mobility spaces are mobility commons, yet not all people experience or benefit from them equally. Gendered and racialized social norms influence confidence, risk perception, and physical ability, leading to unequal experiences. These inequalities often go unrecognized. A concept is needed to describe the psychological stress, fear, or frustration that can occur when different mobility users interact: we call this modal shear.

Modal shear refers to the friction between people moving through shared space at different speeds, weights, sizes, noises, and powers. It can be inter-modal (between modes), intra-modal (within a mode), or infra-modal (between a user and infrastructure). While both "producers" (e.g. a fast-moving e-bike) and "submitters" (e.g. a child cyclist) may feel discomfort, producers often choose to create it, while submitters must absorb or avoid it.

This concept helps articulate hidden injustices in mobility, offering a tool to support hermeneutic justice - by giving name to previously inexpressible experiences - and to interrogate distributive justice in how public space is allocated.

With this paper, we introduce modal shear as a conceptual tool for analyzing mobility interactions. Further work is needed to operationalize and quantify it. Qualitative and mixed-method studies can explore how, when, and where modal shear occurs, and how different groups experience, produce, and submit to it. Identifying modal shear in planning practices can help redefine how urban space is designed and used, fostering fairer and more inclusive mobility systems.

Keywords: mobility, justice, cycling

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Hacking the Ableist Mobility Landscape - How vulnerable citizens challenge established mobility systems and technologies by redesigning them or their interfaces

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Abstract

When disabled bodies are dismissed by the design of various mobility landscapes in the contemporary city these exclusionary design practices often lead to creative and subversive ways of redesigning either artefacts or interfaces to these mobility landscapes. The emerging literature in critical disability studies points at some very interesting critical counter tactics for challenging the exclusion and dismissal of disabled bodies. This paper sets up a theoretical and conceptual scaffolding leaning on affordance theory, situational mobilities, mobility justice, universal design, and critical disabilities studies. Empirically the paper draws on key studies such as Dokumaci's 'Activist Affordances' (2023) and Vehlo's 'Hacking the Underground' (2023) as well as it will integrate points from a research project led by the author related to exclusionary design of people living in homelessness (Jensen, forthcoming). The general point is that when you experience that artefacts, technologies, and spaces are designed for bodies with different capacities you suffer an ableist exclusion. In this paper we shall see how vulnerable citizens and disabled find themselves in positions where they must modify, hack, or redesign either specific artefacts or the interfaces to the mobility landscapes. So next to suffering 'atmospheres of exclusion' (Jensen, forthcoming) when the design of urban materials and spaces dismisses you, the paper focuses on the skills and competencies mobilized by marginalized bodies in order to reclaim accessibility to the mobility landscapes and thus enable alternative mobilities. The paper offers the stories of disabled and vulnerable bodies as a 'window' into potential transformations of the established mobility landscapes that not only are un-sustainable from an environmental point of view, but also from a mobility justice point of view.

Key literature

Dokumaci, A. (2023) *Activist Affordances. How Disabled People Improvise More Habitable Worlds*, Durham: Duke University Press

Jensen, O. B. (forthcoming) *Mobility Injustice by Design*, London: Routledge

Velho, R. (2023) *Hacking the Underground. Disability, Infrastructure and London's Public Transport System*, Seattle: University of Washington Press

Keywords: Hacking, Ableist Mobility, Mobility Justice, Counter tactics, Mobility exclusion

^{*}Speaker

Maintaining mobilities? Active mobility in later life in the face of contemporary urban transformations.

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Abstract

This contribution synthesises the findings of a recent research project which examined the combined effects of population ageing and active mobility transformations in tourist cities. The project developed a qualitative methodology based on interviews and go-alongs that examined everyday mobility practices on foot and by bicycle and the negotiation of urban (tourism) space through the perspective of older citizens. In a first case study in Barcelona, I show how efforts to promote cycling hardly improve the marginal uptake in this age group. By zooming in on the mobility biographies of older adults who (aim to) cycle, I highlight the hindrances and misconceptions regarding age-inclusion in cycling. For the same city, I also discuss the rapidly expanding touristification process through an analysis of active mobility behaviour in and around the tourist core. Importantly, tourist mobilities condition the use of active mobility infrastructures and create new walking and cycling barriers for residents, while the mobilities of both groups mostly unfold in the same spaces and operate at the margins of automobility. In a second case study in the historic centre of Venice, arguably a hegemonic slow mobility environment, I unpack the embodied dimension of walking and the softer elements that make communities healthy, safe and walkable. Longstanding mass tourism has progressively degraded those, reducing access to amenities and halting accessibility measures in walking and public transport infrastructures. In sum, my contribution dissects the benefits attributed to active mobility: while its physical and social qualities are robust and potentially life-changing, its lasting usage relies on engrained mobility practices, deep local knowledge and physical capacities, reducing the possibility to age actively and narrowing the transformational potential of present mobility transitions. Finally, I propose alternative pathways that prioritise urban qualities for all, away from the juxtaposition of active mobility between global flows and local (mobility, tourism) planning choices, outlining a transversal age-friendly approach for academic debates and planning initiatives around urban mobility transformations. **Wilbert den Hoed** is a Ramón y Cajal Research Fellow at the Blanquerna School of Psychology, Education and Sports Sciences (Universitat Ramon Llull). He holds a PhD in Human Geography from Newcastle University and held post-doctoral positions at the Department of Urbanism of TU Delft and at the Department of Geography of the Universitat Rovira i Virgili. His research operates at the intersection of active mobility and social inclusion and justice, taking inspiration from geography, planning, health, and mobility studies.

Keywords: Active mobility, population ageing, age, friendliness, tourism, Barcelona, Venice

^{*}Speaker

Subjective well-being within low carbon mobilities: balancing feelings and meaning

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Abstract

In the context of climate emergency, it is crucial to reduce human mobility's carbon footprint. Sustainable mobility (Banister, 2008) is essentially made of less trips, modal shift and less distance. Taking subjective experiences into account is needed to promote sustainable mobility while attempting to improve subjective well-being (SWB). SWB has two dimensions. In the hedonic dimension well-being is made of experiences of happiness, mostly based upon the satisfaction of preferences and the presence of positive feelings (Ryan & Deci, 2001). On the other hand, the eudaimonic dimension of well-being is related to the meaning of one's life and their personal growth. Previous research has conceptualised the relationship between travel and SWB (De Vos et al., 2013) and showed various quantitative evidence of their links although determining the direction of causality remains a challenge (Mokhtarian, 2019). We believe qualitative research is needed to better understand these links between mobility and the various components of SWB. This communication proposes a qualitative exploration of SWB within low carbon mobility, understood as being either car-free mobility or with a moderate car use (in terms of distance travelled and frequency of use). Our main focus is daily travel behaviour, but we are also considering more occasional practices and how travel routines are embedded in daily life. Our aim is to understand some of the conditions under which daily low carbon mobility can contribute to the hedonic and eudaimonic dimensions of SWB.

Our analysis is based on 44 interviews with low carbon mobility individuals, conducted in France: in Paris region and Nantes metropolitan area. Both urban areas have a well-developed transport system with different level of coverage in accordance to their scale. Drawing on these two geographical contexts, we will study how alternative mobilities contribute negatively or positively to each dimension of SWB. When people are feeling dissatisfied or unhappy regarding some aspects of their daily low carbon mobility, we will show how both dimensions of SWB can balance each other, helping people, on overall, feel satisfied with their mobility.

Biography

I am a PhD candidate in geography at Gustave Eiffel University in Paris Region, France. I have a background in Geography and Urban Planning. My research focuses on low-carbon daily mobilities and how these mobilities are experienced by individuals, in relation to their subjective well-being. I am also a teaching fellow in the Human Geography department, teaching various undergraduate courses.

^{*}Speaker

Keywords: Low carbon mobility, alternative mobility, subjective well, being, transport modes, lifestyle

Stories Behind the Comfort Gaps: Experiences of People with Mobility Impairments in the Urban Built Environment

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Abstract

Urban mobility systems are typically designed with a strong emphasis on efficiency and infrastructure, often overlooking the everyday experiences of users – particularly those with mobility impairments. This paper explores the often-neglected dimension of *comfort* in walking and wheeling through urban environments, drawing on the lived experiences of individuals with mobility impairments.

As part of a set of semi-structured interviews, 85 participants from six European countries with varying mobility impairments or related vulnerabilities described uncomfortable situations across four scenarios: a typical day, nighttime, a hot summer day, and a cold winter day. Participants shared their experiences through a voluntary drawing activity to encourage creative reflection, followed by verbal explanation.

The findings reveal persistent "comfort gaps" in the built environment, transport systems, public service, and in society. Physical factors such as inadequate lighting, lack of shelter, uneven surfaces, and missing curb cuts were common across impairment types. Environmental conditions, particularly rain and snow, posed additional challenges, especially for participants with visual impairments due to altered soundscapes. Snow also emerged as an impassable obstacle where winter maintenance was lacking. Psychological discomfort was associated with the feeling of limited available options and with the perceived presence or unpredictable behavior of other people in public space.

By shifting the focus from standard accessibility approaches to integrated comfort, this study underscores the need to address not only structural, but also sensory, emotional, social, and psychological dimensions of the urban environment. It shows how current systems retain inequalities, limiting the agency and participation of people with mobility impairments. Contributing to debates on mobility justice, the paper proposes a framework that centers lived experience and positions comfort not as a luxury, but as a core principle in inclusive design for the urban built environment and related mobility systems.

About the author:

Lea S. Zuckriegl is a research associate at the Chair of Urban Structure and Transport Planning at the Technical University of Munich (TUM), with a background in Environmental Engineering (MSc, TUM). Her research focuses on the mobility needs of people with diverse impairments, emphasizing inclusive approaches in urban and transport planning. She advocates for participatory methods, co-creation, and the active consideration of marginalized

^{*}Speaker

groups in planning processes. As part of her PhD, she aims to integrate these principles into the higher education of future mobility planners and engineers, fostering more equitable, accessible, and human-centered mobility systems.

Keywords: comfort, mobility impairments, mobility justice, inclusion

Moving around with an anxiety disorder

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Abstract

People with anxiety disorders may encounter anxiety triggers when (planning to) travel(ing) to a destination, affecting their ability to actively participate in society. Using a Multiple Case Study Design, this paper aims to improve our knowledge on mobility-related problems experienced by people with anxiety disorders and their potential impact on these people's daily life. In-depth interviews were held with 40 Dutch adults officially diagnosed with anxiety disorders by professionals in the field of psychology. Data revealed that most interviewees experience a mix of problems in using various transport modes. Interviewees often experience the feeling of being locked up and not being able to escape as anxiety triggers. They perceive the mobility system as complex and overwhelming, while mobility-related information can trigger panic attacks or lower respondents' stress level. Interviewees employ a variety of coping mechanisms: avoidance of transport modes; avoidance of highways, bridges, tunnels; remaining in a familiar, predictable environment; asking for social support when travel is necessary; and searching for adequate travel information to use before and during travel. Coping with anxiety disorders and mobility-related problems may have far-reaching impacts on professional life, including job switching and job relocation. The study shows that it is challenging to define the boundaries of the topic under study and almost impossible to develop a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to alleviate this population's problems. The paper ends with directions for further research into transport interventions that could benefit people with anxiety disorders.

Keywords: Anxiety disorders, Driving phobia, Public transport, Active mobility, Mental illness, Mobility system related problems

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Colonizing Bicycles: The Global Marketing of Raleigh Bicycles in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1950s-1960s

PATRICK BEK

HENK-JAN DEKKER

Abstract

This paper examines how the English bicycle manufacturer Raleigh deployed framings of race, gender, and technology in their marketing practices during the mid-20th century, revealing the entanglements between consumer technology, mobility, and (post)colonial ideology. Drawing on Laura Ann Stoler's analysis of how colonial power operated through everyday practices, and Cindy Ott's visual culture methodology, we demonstrate how colonial and post-colonial bicycle advertisements functioned as sites for reproducing racialized imaginaries of technological progress and modernity. The study focuses on visual representations in Raleigh's global marketing materials, particularly analysing advertisements depicting African man and women in relation to bicycles. Through visual analysis and close reading of these marketing materials, we argue that bicycles were not neutral technological objects but rather became embedded in discourses of modernity and post-colonial development, using Eurocentric tropes that often persevered after independence. This research contributes to our understanding of how mundane consumer objects became carriers for and how mobility itself became entangled with such ideologies – with implications for contemporary discussions of mobility justice in the Global South.

Keywords: bicycles, advertising, Raleigh, global history

Socialism on Test-Drive: Kharkiv-Moscow Road Rallies of 1930–1931 as a Case of Technological Lobbying

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Abstract

"These 6 motorcycles mark a victory over capitalism," stated a public official of "Ukrainian Metal" in his address to the participants of the Kharkiv-Moscow road rally of 1931. The direct meaning of the message was that the Soviet Union was now ready to start mass production of motorcycles after decades of capitalist exploitation and Bolshevik struggles. However, a deeper agenda behind the speech was lobbying for the construction of a motorcycle factory in Kharkiv, the capital of the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic.

The presentation aims to deconstruct the culture of road rallies in the early Soviet Union by examining participants' experiences and motivations. The research will scrutinize individual and group initiative within the state system that eliminated private ownership. It will demonstrate that lobbying existed in early 1930s Soviet Ukraine, similar to other European and North Atlantic models of road construction and transport industry.

Road rallies () were highly ideologized events organized by state officials, drivers, mechanics, journalists, photographers, filmmakers, and welcoming citizens across Soviet republics. The ideological framework presented these rallies as unified efforts to combat roadlessness, create a unified Soviet space, and prepare for future war. However, a closer examination reveals conflicting technological visions among participants.

While many solutions by Kharkiv industrialists were copied from Western technologies, local economic conditions, natural landscape, and social traditions created a unique automobile culture. This research offers the first in-depth, micro-historical exploration of road rallies as a method of testing automobiles and motorcycles.

The presentation does not focus on alternative mobilities per se; in fact, it demonstrates the extent to which West-oriented images of the motorcycle as an adventure vehicle inspired transport development in interwar Soviet Ukraine. However, it will demonstrate that the path of motorization was not predefined. Being isolated in their knowledge production by the limitations of Soviet politics, a group of technicians and drivers deployed creative solutions in developing their production, aimed at matching the achievements of the capitalist world without the resources that this world offered.

Keywords: Interwar Transport Infrastructure, Soviet Ukraine, Technological Transfer, Road Rally, Socialism, Stalinism

*Speaker

When legacies meet reforms: tense layering of urban transport policies

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Abstract

The dominance of automobility poses substantial challenges to decarbonizing passenger transport (1,2). Previous research has identified path dependencies in institutional change, technological innovation, and user behaviors as barriers to radically transform the transport system. However the extent to which legacies of the automobility paradigm have remained embedded in transport policies has received less scholarly attention, particularly in the context of promoting sustainable mobility. These legacies can include regulations and guidelines that justify further investment in technology or infrastructure for private cars to increase the efficiency of the transport network.

To address this gap, this contribution examines the persistence of automobility paradigm in the development of policies for sustainable mobility. It draws on the taxonomy of policy composition (3) to break down policies into the broad ideas that guide policymaking, the logics of selecting instruments, and specific goals and instruments formulated in policy documents. Then, the study relies on four design processes, namely "layering", "drift", "conversion", and "exhaustion" in the policy design literature (4) to assess the pattern of policy development over time, with a focus on the concept "layering". These theoretical tools are applied to a case study of the City of Espoo, Finland by analyzing the city strategies, climate action plans and transport policies for sustainable mobility. The analysis focuses on the 2013 – 2023 period, in which Espoo highlights sustainability in its development agenda, including transport sector. The results show a "tense layering" (5), or parallel addition of conflicting policy instruments and implementation settings that emphasize both growth and sustainability, which ultimately supports the expansion of private car infrastructure. The study provides recommendations for identifying and removing car-centric policies to break the legacies of the automobility paradigm and reform the transport system for more sustainability.

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Keywords: transport policy, policy design, sustainable mobility, policy layering

Linking the city to the airport: circulating models and territorial differentiation of European airport services

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Abstract

After the Second World War, European countries progressively developed major civil airport infrastructures. The boom in air transport from the 1960s onwards led to the construction and expansion of new airports, located on the outskirts of cities because of the space they consumed and the nuisance they caused, making the question of their land accessibility crucial. Although a few pioneering airports had rail connections before 1960, this phenomenon remained minor. From the 1970s onwards, the creation of integrated rail stations intensified in Western Europe, and spread to the whole continent, as witnessed by Frankfurt (1972), Paris-Roissy (1976), London-Heathrow (1977) and Amsterdam-Schiphol (1978) (Varlet, 2000). This dynamic has been catalyzed by the growth in air traffic and the recognition of the strategic importance of airport access, which is gradually becoming an element of distinction between major cities (Ageron, 2013).

An overview of these airport links reveals similarities in airport service patterns. However, these transport infrastructures are part of a local context and a transport ecosystem that gives them unique characteristics, differentiating them from other airport services. This uniqueness leads us to analyze the extent to which the circulation of airport service models creates similar or differentiated infrastructure typologies between different European international airports.

After taking stock of land-based airport services at Europe's main airports, and identifying and analyzing shared characteristics, we will propose service ideal-types by looking in more detail at specific examples, enabling us to characterize the different airport service alternatives that coexist at European airports. The originality of this paper lies in the town-planning and historical approach used to deal with city-airport links, which are usually analyzed from an economic point of view.

Biography:

Abel GIRARD is an engineer with a master's degree in urban planning, and is currently in the first year of PhD under the supervision of Arnaud Passalacqua and Laurent Terral, at the Université Gustave Eiffel, in Paris (abel.girard@enpc.fr). His research focuses on the city-airport link, offering a long-term analysis of how it was conceived and designed, and the arguments put forward to justify its infrastructure. His approach is based on a historical methodology, drawing on a variety of archives and interviews. His main field of study is the Paris region, in particular the OrlyVAL and CDG Express projects, but he is also interested in similar infrastructures abroad.

*Speaker

Keywords: Airport, city, airport link, accessibility, railway

Social construction of technology and sustainable transport planning knowledge

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Abstract

Technology can be defined as the application of science to useful ends (Mitcham and Schatzberg, 2009). This broad definition can include the application of transport planning knowledge to transport policy aiming to shape transport systems.

Critical constructivism, a critical interpretation of social construction of technology states that technologies provide historically stratified reflections of social values. Under capitalism, hegemonic interests push for values such as expanding the market economy and favouring the capitalist class. (Feenberg, 2024) In line with this idea, political economy analysis has revealed how the expansion of road transport systems has been aligned with the interests of car manufacturing and related industries: for example, road construction can be justified both in times of economic downturns – as Keynesian stimulation of demand – and in times of growth – as predict-and-provide for demand (Mattioli et al., 2020). Application of knowledge like this contributes to a lock-in of car-dependent transport systems and high greenhouse gas emissions. In order to challenge this, sustainable transport system alternatives need to avoid "technocratic and apolitical presentation". (Mattioli et al., 2020)

In this study, I support the efforts to advance non-technocratic and political presentation of transport alternatives. With the help of critical constructivism I provide a further analysis how transport planning knowledge incorporates hegemonic values. This gives ideas how the process of knowledge creation and utilization can become a forum for overt political choices while still legitimately applying relevant scientific knowledge.

The study points to a challenge of a "double" technocracy. Firstly, the engineering style methods paint a picture of transport systems as a matter of mathematical and neutral efficiency. Secondly, the assumption that the application of transport planning knowledge is straightforward, with no ulterior motives, obscures how different methods can be used to justify different outcomes. As a remedy, both the transport systems themselves and developing and applying knowledge about them should be considered as embodying value judgements and involve political decisions.

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Maria Käpyvaara, M.Sc.(Tech.), works as a doctoral researcher at Aalto University, Department of Built Environment in Espoo, Finland. Her master's thesis investigated the interplay between the universal portrayal of a transport concept, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and the

*Speaker

meanings and roles it gained in local planning environments. She has previously worked with Smart City development at the City of Helsinki. She is preparing her thesis that applies philosophy of technology to gain new perspectives on sustainable transport planning.

Keywords: technology, social construction of technology, critical constructivism, car dependence, sustainable transport, transport knowledge

Feminist perspectives on mobility

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Abstract

Mobility planning in cities is not gender-neutral, it is gender-blind. Gendered mobility patterns, experiences and needs are not considered or accommodated despite a wealth of research on the subject. The consequences include women and LGBTQIA+ people limited in their mobility due to fear of harassment, the neglect of diverse, interdependent mobilities of care, prioritizing direct individual commuting trips and design of spaces of mobility that are not accommodating the needs of their diverse users.

Feminist scholarship does not only highlight gender-insensitivity and related intersectional exclusions of mobility planning but also generates questions and concepts that offer a radical critique of mainstream mobility planning narratives and approaches. Furthermore, feminist epistemology and ethics stimulate (co-)creating knowledge about mobilities differently than it is usually done, emphasizing active search of unheard voices, co-creation, reflexivity on researcher's positionality and care. This panel taps into the potential of feminist perspectives for rethinking mobility and offers:

- a discussion of the role of knowledge in gender-insensitive mobility planning – from a more theoretical perspective (contribution by Anna Nikolaeva and Irene Gomez Varo) to demonstrating how novel co-creative approaches can work in practice (contribution by Sandra de la Rota).
- A conversation on the potential for change through the eye of planners, policy-makers and activists (contributions by Eva Kwakman and Anna Nikolaeva & Irene Gomez Varo)
- a discussion of rethinking streets through countering street harassment (Eva Kwakman)
- a presentation of alternative narrative of mobility in a car-centric environment, created by Latin American migrant women through participatory filmmaking experiment (Sandra La Rota)

Next to traditional Q&A's after each paper, we will also engage the public in discussion at the end of the session to brainstorm pathways to making feminist thought a more significant driving force in rethinking urban mobility.

Keywords: feminism, care, knowledge, urban planning, sexual harassment, participatory methods

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Rethinking mobility planning knowledge from a feminist perspective

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Abstract

Although human geography, urban planning, and mobilities research acknowledge that mobility policy and planning marginalise women and LGBTQIA+ individuals, there is no systematic, detailed analysis of how knowledge production and use precondition this insensitivity. Research on inclusive cities and gendered mobilities demands more gender-disaggregated data and diversity among planners and transport researchers as a prerequisite for making urban mobilities more just. Despite these contributions, it remains unclear why this existing work has had such little impact on mobility policy and planning. Given this failure, simply collecting further data will likely prove futile without first understanding how the knowledge production in mobility planning works and can be changed. Analysing what we term ‘mobility planning knowledge’ through a feminist epistemological lens, we highlight the role of power in knowledge production. We offer the first analysis of the intersections between knowledge and gender insensitivity in mobility planning, building on a literature review (see Nikolaeva and Shakthi, In Press) and the first insights from three case studies around the world: Barcelona, Santiago de Chile and Amsterdam.

Works cited:

Nikolaeva A. & S. Shakthi S. (In Press). Moving Towards Gender-Sensitive Urban Mobility Planning: Unpacking the Role of Knowledge. *Urban Studies*.

This paper is linked to the panel: Feminist perspective on mobilities

Bio's

Anna Nikolaeva is Assistant Professor in Urban Planning at the University of Amsterdam (UvA). In her research, writing and teaching she engages with a variety of topics in urban planning and human geography, currently focusing on the intersections between low-carbon and just mobility transitions, gendered mobilities and the politics of knowledge in planning. Before joining UvA she conducted research and taught at Utrecht University, Royal Holloway, University of London and VU University Amsterdam, and was a visiting scholar at City University of New York.

Irene Gómez-Varo is a Postdoctoral Researcher at the University of Amsterdam, working on epistemic justice in mobility transitions with a feminist lens. She holds a PhD in Human Geography from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB). Within the Research Group in Mobility, Transport and Land Use (GEMOTT), her doctoral work investigated

*Speaker

proximity-based environments and daily life dynamics, focusing on mobility and gender. She has been a visiting researcher at Université Pantheon Sorbonne, the University of Tokyo, and RMIT University. Her academic background includes a BA in Sociology (University of Barcelona) and a Master's in Population and Territorial Studies (UAB).

Keywords: feminism, care, knowledge, urban planning, gendered mobilities

Collective responsibility or law and order?: How social organizations against street harassment narrate responsibilities and intervention

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Abstract

Throughout history, public space and mobility systems – most notably, automobility – have been shaped according to the practices and daily occupations of men (Sheller, 2018), in line with the conception of public space as being for men and private space as being for women (Siwach, 2020). This gives rise to gendered inequalities in im/mobility, many of which are obscured by the dominant approach to mobility and accessibility as simply moving from A to B with space as a neutral, ‘empty background for mobile activities’ (Sheller, 2018: 26-27). This paper focuses on resistance and advocacy against street harassment, one of those everyday gendered experiences that play out *during* travel, and which reproduces public space as masculine and heteronormative, putting women and LGBTQI+ people back into place (Fileborn, 2021a). Consequently, people’s ‘freedom to move’ *and* their ‘right to stay in place’ (Sheller, 2018: 74) are affected. Drawing on ethnography and document analysis, this paper scrutinizes whether and how the resistance and advocacy work of social (movement) organizations in the Dutch context constructs and counters street harassment in such a way that it promotes a right to public space and mobility for all, rather than spatial disciplining and control of others. Moreover, it highlights the existing (gendered) (power) relations with other actors and institutions that mediate or restrict the ways in which social (movement) organizations construct and counter street harassment. Thus, the presentation provides opportunity for discussion and reflection on the possibilities and unknowns of resistance against such symptoms of patriarchy, so that mobility and immobility might become more equitable.

–
Comment to the organizers: this presentation is part of the session ‘Feminist perspectives on mobility’, organized by Anna Nikolaeva and Irene Gómez Varo.

Keywords: Gendered mobilities, mobility justice, feminist approaches, resistance, advocacy, street harassment

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Being cared for: a community-based and participatory filmmaking experiment

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Abstract

Important note: I am submitting this abstract for the session "Feminist perspectives on mobility" organised by Nikoleva and Gomez Varo.

Initiatives such as 15-minute cities and low-emission zones aim to counteract automobile domination within city limits. However, what about the spaces between cities, the peripheries, and rural areas? Are they destined to remain dominated by automobiles? To encounter, nurture and empower alternative narratives (te Brömmelstroet, et al., 2022) we designed a community-based and participatory filmmaking experiment where 'alternative' perspectives of non-moving by automobile in automobile-dominated areas were protagonists. During a series of workshops with Latin American migrant women living in the periphery of cities and rural areas in the Netherlands, we created a 44-minute film titled "Retazos Móviles". This experiment resists the gaze to see the global south as a space to do ethnography (Castañeda, 2021), and instead recognises it as a place for constructing knowledge and theory, a place to build new worlds together (Mckittrick, 2020). These worlds were embroidered, rememorating a textile technique (Arpillera), where materials have agency (Bolt, 2007) and history. The film challenges stereotypes about migrant women not cycling and instead emphasises the significance of cycling for fostering a sense of belonging. It portrays public transport as a place of liberation and addresses the often-invisible immobility experienced by mothers during their baby's early childhood. It highlights volunteer-based transport as a space of spontaneity and emphasises that small cities are desirable destinations. Moreover, this experience situates methodologies not only as places to gather information but as a way of being (Mckittrick, 2020, p. 00:28:37). Where not only participants are *being* cared for, but also researchers.

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*Speaker

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Keywords: Methodologies with care, epistemic justice, mobility justice, community, based filmmaking, decolonization.

Propelled to Safety: Egbé An Indigenous Alternative Mobility and Acceleration in Yorùbá Cosmology

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Abstract

Modern mobility models, particularly within the social history of technology are often emphasised as instruments of leisure and adventure. Historically, these technologies facilitated countryside tourism among men and adventurous women (Van der Vleuten, Oldenziel, & Davids, 2017). However, such narratives are grounded in Eurocentric paradigms that rely on linear time and static geographies. In contrast, African indigenous systems-such as those of the Yorùbá-perceive time and space as cyclical, relational, and fluid. Concepts like ancestral presence and spiritual mobility are often overlooked or dismissed as metaphorical rather than real (Hunfeld, 2022). This study seeks to interrogate these ontological differences by exploring *Egbé*, an indigenous Yoruba model of mobility and acceleration, as a potential alternative framework for sustainable and community-centered transport. Drawing on in-depth interviews, the study uncovers how *Egbé* operates through metaphysical and physiological domains including sound, emergencies, and the endocrine system. Oral traditions, chants and proverbs are also analysed to trace the metaphysical and practical applications of *Egbé* in everyday life and mobility. Three key categories of *Egbé* mobility emerge: one that returns the initiate's home in times of danger, another that brings the initiate closer to their destination, and a third that transports the initiate to unknown and potentially perilous locations. The actors linked to *Egbé* mobility include hunters, warriors, kings, and in modern times, long distance drivers. This indigenous model offers a relational and spiritual approach to acceleration that contrasts with dominant Western notions and opens possibilities for reimagining mobility in African contexts.

Keywords: Indigenous mobility models, Yorùbá cosmology, Relational acceleration, spiritual transportation, decolonising transport narratives

^{*}Speaker

Alternative Mobilities: Indigenous Yoruba Transport Epistemologies since Antiquity

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Abstract

Mainstream assessments of African transportation often rely on Western frameworks privileging speed, mechanization, and physical infrastructure. These paradigms marginalize indigenous African mobility systems rooted in metaphysical, relational, and ecologically balanced worldviews. This panel explores Yoruba cosmological models- *Egbé*, *Kánàkò*, *Kádoko* and *f* -to illuminate how spiritual and cultural dimensions redefine mobility beyond physical transport.

Ucheawaji G. Josiah proposes *Egbé* as a spiritual vehicle of acceleration within Yoruba cosmology. His thesis critiques Eurocentric linear models and repositions mobility as relational and metaphysical. Drawing on in-depth interviews, oral traditions, and proverbs, Josiah identifies three forms of *Egbé* travel: protection-return in danger, destination-fast-forwarding, and perilous displacement. His study reveals how mobility, linked to hunters, kings, and modern drivers, can be spiritually animated and communally centered.

Olatunji E. Alao explores *Kánàkò*, a journey-shortening ritual practice. Through Key Informant Interviews, he documents how emissaries and masquerades compressed time and space across villages. While effective, this system incurs metaphysical costs-users often suffer exhaustion due to spiritual compensation. His thesis argues for a culturally embedded, non-linear model of mobility with sustainability potential.

Mary A.Y. Lewu investigates *Kádoko*, a spirit-led agrarian mobility system. Her thesis foregrounds invisible, metaphysical transportation as a productive force. Using historical and ethnographic methods, Lewu shows how ancestral spirits cultivate farmland, governed by strict taboos and moral economies. Chants, oral histories, and proverbs illuminate a non-material transport logic that deconstructs colonial assumptions of productivity and movement.

Olabode J. Omotosho examines *f*, a principle of effortless motion. Utilizing interpretive phenomenological analysis, he uncovers how energy transfer during festivals (e.g., *Eégún elérù*) enables mystical load redistribution. *f* emerges as a community-centered, ecologically attuned mobility model challenging extractive transport ideologies.

Together, these studies advocate for the decolonization of transport narratives through indigenous African ontologies.

Keywords: Yoruba Mobilities, *Egbé*, *Kánàkò*, *Kádoko* and *f*

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Compressing Distance: *Kánàkò* an Indigenous Innovation in Journey Shortening and Mobility futures

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Abstract

While ritual travels possess political, ecological, and communal significance, they are often marginalized in dominant mobility discourses. *Kánàkò* offers an alternative framework that redefines distance beyond physical metrics, proposing a non-linear, sustainable model rooted in indigenous knowledge. This study examines *Kánàkò*, an indigenous Yoruba innovation aimed at shortening journeys, and its implications for mobility futures. Drawing from Yorùbá cosmology, the study highlights how *Kánàkò* was utilised in precolonial times by select individuals such as kings, their emissaries (*àrokò*), and special masquerades responsible for communication and entertainment. These actors employed *Kánàkò* to transmit urgent messages across villages, effectively reducing a three-day journey on foot to a single day. However, the temporal gain of time was believed to be compensated for in the spiritual realm during sleep, with users often experiencing significant physical exhaustion the next day. Through Key Informant Interviews (KII), the research uncovers both the merits and limitations of this practice. The model provided efficient, discrete communication, strengthening inter-village ties and reinforcing social hierarchy. Yet, the physical toll and the exclusivity of access limited its broader applicability. By engaging with this indigenous mode of mobility, the study challenges dominant, linear conceptions of travel and advocates for a broader understanding of sustainable mobility practices embedded in cultural and spiritual contexts. This work contributes to the growing discourse on indigenous knowledge systems, mobility, and sustainability, encouraging critical reflection on how alternative epistemologies can reshape contemporary transport paradigms.

Keywords: Indigenous mobility innovation, Yorùbá cosmology, non, linear journey models, *Kánàkò* travel practice, sustainable transport epistemologies

^{*}Speaker

Mobilising the Invisible: Kádoko as Indigenous Spirit-Transport and Alternative Mobility

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Abstract

This study examines *Kádoko* an indigenous mechanism of spirit-transport and an alternative model of mobility within African cosmological thought. Challenging colonial and Eurocentric paradigms that privilege the visible and measurable, this research foregrounds the intangible and spiritual dimensions of movement often marginalised in dominant historiographies and spatial documentation. Drawing from historical and ethnographic methodologies, the study explores how indigenous cosmologies conceptualise invisible mobilities, with specific attention to the spiritual engagement of ancestral spirits for agrarian purposes. Oral traditions, chants and proverbs are also analysed in this study. *Kádoko* functions as a culturally embedded transport system whereby the spirits of the deceased are believed to be mobilised from their graves to farm sites, performing extraordinary feats of cultivation. These spirit-led movements are marked by exceptional speed and efficiency, illustrating an alternative logic of labour and productivity rooted in metaphysical agency. However, this model is also bound by strict taboos and spiritual injunctions. The mobiliser is prohibited from consuming the produce cultivated through this means, under penalty of death. Furthermore, upon the death of the mobiliser, any wealth accrued through this practice dissipates, leaving no inheritance. These constraints highlight a distinctive moral economy and spiritual ecology governing the use of *Kádoko* underscoring both its functional power and its embedded ethical codes. The study contributes to broader discourses on indigenous innovation, spiritual economies, and the decolonisation of mobility studies by interrogating alternative logics of movement beyond the physical and material.

Keywords: Indigenous mobility systems, spirit transport, Yorùbá cosmology, alternative agrarian labour, decolonising movement narratives

^{*}Speaker

Lightening the Load: Indigenous Strategies for Effortless and Sustainable Mobilities

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Abstract

Contemporary transport systems are predominantly driven by ideals of speed, efficiency, and mechanised control (Rodrigue, 2024, Geels, 2005). These paradigms often prioritize acceleration over sustainability, overlooking alternative ontologies that center relationality, balance, and ecological harmony. This study engages the Yoruba concept of *f*-a principle that denotes effortless and the lightening of burdens as a critical lens through which to rethink mobility. Oral traditions, chants, proverbs, and divination texts are analyzed to trace the metaphysical and practical applications of *f* in everyday life and mobility. Data analysis follows an interpretive phenomenological approach (IPA), allowing the researcher to uncover the lived experiences and cultural meanings embedded in *f* as a mobility concept. In this model for instance, during the festival of *Eégún elérù* (a masquerade that carries a mask that is up to a ton of cement), in order for the masquerade to move freely and smartly, the loads are mystically distributed to the onlookers thus making it easier for the masquerade to accelerate smoothly. *f* foregrounds effortless movement, suggesting an alternative paradigm where mobility is not merely mechanical but relational, energetic, and ecologically attuned. Findings reveal that *f* operates not only as a metaphysical principle but also as a pragmatic strategy used by certain social actors-such as spiritual practitioners, traders, and even modern-day lumberers-to reduce physical and psychological load during movement. The study argues that *f* offers a model of mobility that is non-extractive, community-centered, and environmentally responsive.

Keywords: Effortless movement, Indigenous Yorùbá mobility strategies, Sustainable and relational transport, Eégún elérù

*Speaker

Virtual mobility before the internet age: Impacts on global travel.

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Abstract

In the 21st century the internet provides almost unlimited access to people and places all over the globe via a variety of apps and social media channels. However, rather than satisfying desires for travel through virtual mobility, global travel and tourism has increased, with social media such as Tik Tok and Instagram generating content that can lead to damaging over-tourism in trending locations. However, we know very little about how people accessed information about distant people, places and cultures in the past, nor do we know how this may have affected their global travel. In this paper I use a large archive of letters written between 1946 and 2013 to examine this theme. The letters were written by Jean Bruce who lived in Toronto Canada to her pen friend Betty Charnley who lived in North Lancashire, England. Both ladies were born in 1928 and began writing when they were aged 18, with the correspondence only ceasing when Jean died in 2013. In addition to the mundane conversations that took place, the letters also reveal a good deal about the nature of pen pal networks in the mid-twentieth century. In total, Jean Bruce wrote to at least 43 different pen friends spread across some 30 different countries. In her letters to Betty, she passed on information about her pen pals including in some cases their contact details. Through her pen friends Jean gained substantial information about the lives of people in places very different from the city in which she lived. Jean Bruce did also travel quite widely for vacations, especially in the Americas, the Caribbean and Europe, but there is little evidence that her much wider network of pen friends generated travel, though she did meet up with some pen pals when convenient. In conclusion, the paper will argue that although communication was much slower, virtual mobility through letters was important in the mid-twentieth century and could generate some global travel.

Keywords: Virtual mobility, Pen Pals, Global Travel

*Speaker

The Historical Memory and Cultural Preservation of Fushun Electric Railway: From Transportation Heritage to Urban Memory

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Abstract

This paper explores the transformation of China's railway heritage through a detailed case study of the Fushun Electric Railway, one of the earliest electric suburban railways built in the early 20th century. Originally constructed to support coal transport and daily commuting in Northeast China, Fushun Electric Railway played a critical role in regional industrial development. However, with the decline of heavy industry, restructuring of state-owned enterprises, and the rise of automobile-centered transport, the railway fell into disuse and passenger service ended in 2012. Through historical analysis, field investigation, and archival research, this study traces the lifecycle of Fushun Electric Railway—from the original development of heavy industry to the depletion of mineral resources, which is on the verge of abandonment and finally to recent calls for preservation. It highlights broader national patterns, including the marginalization of local railways, loss of industrial infrastructure, and the impacts of automobilization. The paper further examines current governmental and social organization efforts to reinterpret the Fushun Electric Railway as a potential site of cultural and industrial transportation heritage. Some proposals envision it as a revived suburban transit route. The Fushun Electric Railway serves as a microcosm of the tensions between development and preservation, memory and materiality, and highlights the growing importance of community-based heritage discourse in shaping how post-industrial landscapes are remembered and reused. And this case illustrates the tension between urban development and transportation heritage preservation, and reflects growing public interest in reclaiming industrial pasts. As Chinese cities re-evaluate their relationship with former industrial assets, cases like Fushun Electric Railway provide insight into the evolving cultural, educational, and spatial significance of railways heritage. Biography

Mr. Chao Zheng (Ph.D.) is an associate professor in the College of Traffic & Transportation at Chongqing Jiaotong University Chongqing, China, Post-Doctoral in Urban and Rural Planning, Chongqing University & Chongqing Planning and Design Institute, Chongqing, China, a Visiting Scholar on State Scholarship at Cardiff University, UK. His research mainly includes transportation cultural history and tourism. He has edited 5 government transport policy documents and 6 industry standards, published more than 30 papers (10 in SCI/E), authorized more than 30 patents and software copyrights, and edited 2 monographs. He currently serves as a general secretary in Static traffic Professional Committee of Chongqing Highway and Transportation Society, Chongqing, China.

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Keywords: railways heritage, Fushun Electric Railway, transportation heritage preservation, urban renewal

Between recycling and permanence: coaches' ecological repositioning within metropolitan areas

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Abstract

If transport systems have shown to be a sector where experimentations are numerous (Geels, 2012; Hodson, 2017) it appears they undergo a cycling and even a recycling process, where older modes of transportation and infrastructure can sometimes reemerge (Passalacqua, 2011) with alternative strategies. This tension between permanence and recycling is visible in coaches: the vehicle and road infrastructure they ride on remain the same, but their representations and uses change over time.

Following a brief historical context on the emergence of coaches and motorways in Europe in the 20th century, this communication aims to introduce a dialogue between permanence and recycling of coaches' representations and uses through an analysis of European examples – France, Italy and Germany – of express coaches, which is a derived form of coaches presented by public authorities as an alternative mobility system to tackle automobility. Express coaches are presented as a collective means of transport in substitution to cars, that contributes to changing road uses, especially those of motorways, making them more ecological. In this ecological repositioning of coaches and roads, some representations and uses are summoned while some are left aside. But the permanence of the mode and the infrastructure remains, alongside its underlying political strategy, that of the metropolis. This ongoing research assumes that the ecological repositioning of coaches, via its renewed offer of express coaches on motorways, is a mere repositioning of the metropolitan system, criticized for its lack of sustainability. Therefore, behind this apparent alternative mobility lies the ecological repositioning of another kind of permanence: that of the metropolis.

This communication will be based on a study of discourses and images to illustrate how the different stakeholders conceive coaches today; this first material will be historically contextualised by an analysis of archives used to retrace coaches' representations and uses over time. A few interviews of institutional actors that partake in transport governance will also be presented.

Biography

The context of a recent French law regarding transportation systems deployed in suburban areas led me to focus my research on what appears to be a recycling of coaches' uses and representations. Although this transportation system has been used since the 20th century, it is now being brought to the fore under its derived form, the express coaches, considered by some stakeholders to be the solution to automobility in suburban areas. I question their political agenda and interests in this repositioning.

*Speaker

Keywords: Transport infrastructure, metropolis, suburban areas, permanence, political recycling, ecological repositionning, express coaches, representations, motorways, genealogy of transportation means.

Alternative Energy Transitions - Past and Future of the Trolleybus Technology

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Abstract

The problems related to climate change preformulated the political and technological agenda, including the role of transport. The search for a pollution-free transportation system became urgent, and the best solution is seen in the development of the battery industry, battery cars and buses. Many municipalities around the world started to show their progressiveness by introducing new battery buses. Recently, it has been found that there are ecological problems related to batteries. On the other hand, the trolleybus technology offers an electric alternative to the battery bus in the 21st century. However the discussions over the perceived old technology while promoting the new one are scarce. This paper approaches the introduction of the new technology from the perspective of the older one - the trolleybus - and ask what are the factors for choosing one technology instead of another. The paper studies the potential of this technology and its application in addressing public transport developments from a long-term environmental perspective. It elaborates on the istory of an environmentally friendly technology in its interrelationships with other types of public transportation. In a broader sense, the paper will identify and analyze the environmental aspects of urban transport: when and how the relationship between transport and climate change has been problematized; what have been the main arguments and proposed solutions; what is the relationship between environmental arguments, political views and business interests; whose arguments prevail. It will identify and analyze the interplay of factors and arguments (technological; pragmatic, related to urban planning; social; economic; environmental, etc.) for replacing one type of urban transport technology - the trolleybus - with another - the battery bus.

Keywords: Energy transition, Sustainable transport, trolleybus, battery bus, pollution, public transport

*Speaker

”Clustering” and mobile regimes of adaptation in the tourist city: the ageing citizens of Venice’s historic centre

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Abstract

This study explores how Venice’s old age population responds to long-term tourism-induced transformations and adapts their everyday mobilities to shifts in the lived experience of citizenship on the island. It takes a ‘host’ perspective within a project addressing challenges related to active mobility and population aging in European tourist cities. In Venice, 15 participants aged 60-82 took part in walkalong interviews, reflecting on their long-term biographies and mobility experiences.

Two key findings that emerged from the analysis are addressed here. First, older residents often seek alternative routes to avoid tourist-heavy paths in their daily movements. They also emphasize the need for ”places for Venetians”-spaces where they can restore their sense of belonging through grassroots cultural initiatives. Second, many residents express a sense of being ”the odd one out” in their own hometown, a feeling exacerbated by the lack of an efficient and affordable medical transport service within the Venice archipelago. This directly impacts both the lived and projected experiences of aging in a city where walkability is constrained by an irremediable urban structure.

This paper extends prior results on the bodily dimensions of walking and adapting to tourist mobilities by considering Venice’s water mobility. Water transport is highly regulated, requires expertise, represents Venice’s heritage, and is crucial for delivering goods and services essential to the city’s functioning.

By placing fieldwork results in the context of island studies, Venice’s evolution as a tourist-historic city in the 20th century emerges as a biopolitical project, in which citizens’ rights and mobilities are reshaped not only in response to the city’s shift from a production centre to a site of heritage consumption and a thriving art industry, but also to the challenges of adapting the coastal ecosystem to the emerging welfare state.

Keywords: Venice, tourism, ageing, island studies, biopolitics

^{*}Speaker

Saying no to motorway extensions in Switzerland: anatomy of a referendum campaign

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Abstract

Saying no to motorway extensions in Switzerland: anatomy of a referendum campaign

In November 2024, 52% of the Swiss people voted against six motorway extension projects in a national referendum. In the media, the rejection of these projects was described as historic and marking a turning point for automobility in Switzerland (20 Minutes). While one side defended projects deemed necessary to relieve motorway congestion, the other considered them outdated and in contradiction with Switzerland's climate objectives. The campaign was lively, with a strong media presence from politicians on all sides and tense discussions about congestion and induced traffic. We offer an analysis of this campaign through the prism of *motonormativity*, defined as "shared biases that prevent people and institutions from judging motorised transport objectively and dispassionately" (Walker and te Brömmelstroet 2024, 1). *Motonormativity* offers a useful lens to examine the ways automobility is defended, promoted and challenged in public debates.

Based on a review of the French-language media coverage of the campaign and on a dozen interviews with public figures involved in the referendum committee (or more broadly who campaigned for the No vote), we question the role and values assigned to automobility in contemporary Switzerland. The concept of motonormativity is therefore explored, operationalized and discussed through our Swiss case-study. Theoretically, our presentation will also draw inspiration from the fields of mobilities studies (values, emotions, inequalities and political debates in the field of mobility; Walks 2015, Sheller 2018), environmental psychology (cognitive biases in the realm of mobilities ; Walker & Te Brömmelstroet 2024), social and cultural geography (sense of place, place attachment and landscape preservation...; Sébastien 2020), and environmental history (the history of opposition and acceptance to major infrastructure projects; Magalhães 2024, Robert 2025).

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^{*}Speaker

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Keywords: motorways, motornormativity, referendum, mobility justice, Switzerland

Fighting and looking for alternatives: highways opponents' counterproposals (France, Switzerland, 1955-2025)

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Abstract

In most European countries, highways were planned after the Second World War with the support of broad political and economically powerful circles. In the 1960's, Switzerland and France began constructing ambitious highway networks, which are now nearly complete. However, there was substantial opposition from the beginning of these big and national infrastructure projects. This contribution explores the content and motivations of these opposing voices across three periods: during the planning and initial construction phase in the 1950's–1960's; in the context of the emergence of political ecology in the 1970's and 1980's; and in the present day.

In today's struggles, the climate emergency can be considered as a new and decisive factor influencing mobilizations against highway expansions in Switzerland and new projects such as the A69 Toulouse–Castres in France. In the current political debates around mobility choices, defenders of highways often accuse environmental activists of failing to offer viable alternatives. On the contrary, it appears that opponents often propose alternatives, but that these proposals are not enough publicized or remain silenced. Is there a continuity in the alternatives proposed by anti-highway movements from the 1950's to 2025? The aim of this contribution is to explore the counterproposals or alternative visions of mobility put forward by activists opposing highway developments. The contribution seeks to explore the alternatives to highways, how and why they tend to be silenced by examining two case-studies in each country and in every period. The analysis is based on media coverage (a selection from a press corpus), as well as material produced by the associations (local associations against highways and environmental groups).

Tiphaine Robert is adjunct lecturer at the University of Lausanne (Faculty of political and social sciences). Tiphaine currently conducts research on the development of automobile traffic in western societies. She was visiting scholar at the Laboratory of urban sociology (EPFL) and at the Rachel Carson Center in Munich (2022-2023) thanks to a Swiss National Science Foundation (SNF) Fellowship. In 2024, she obtained an SNF "Ambizione" grant for a new project on pedestrian mobility in the automotive age (University of Bern 2025-2029). Previously, she conducted research on Cold War refugees (University of Fribourg/EHESS, Paris/Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest) and published her thesis in 2021 (*Des migrants et des revenants: Une histoire des réfugiées et réfugiés hongrois en Suisse*).

Keywords: history, highways, environment

^{*}Speaker

Folk law and infrastructure

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Abstract

This paper examines the interplay between formal rules and regulations, street infrastructure, and what I call ‘folk law’. Drawing on legal pluralism, legal consciousness, performativity and prefiguration, I use ‘folk law’ to describe understandings about appropriate use of streets which derive their authority not from courts or legislatures, but from custom and social acceptance. The paper focuses on Australia and North America, where my fieldwork has been conducted to date.

While some cities have made progress in reducing the enormous social, economic and environmental costs of automobility, the pace of change in many Australian and North American cities has been far too slow. Frustrated by the obduracy of car-oriented street infrastructure and the laws that sustain it, the practices I study work against automobility in a range of ways. Some are deployed by activists, explicitly political and vigorously visible efforts to disrupt the status quo. Others operate in a different register, engaging not as activists but as commuters and commercial cyclists making do. Despite their very different approaches to politics and publicity, these practices are comparable in their use of objects and bodies to enact (at least temporarily) alternative, more just and sustainable mobilities. Analysis of these practices shows that infrastructure and legality are deeply entangled, and that ‘folk law’ can be more important than formal law in shaping how streets are used and understood. What makes these practices especially hopeful, I argue, is their attention to folk legality and their potential to disrupt it.

Bio

Amelia Thorpe is Professor of Law at UNSW Sydney. In 2025-2026, she is the City of Paris Chair at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Paris. Amelia works in planning, property and environmental law, focusing on mobility and urban governance. Her approach is sociolegal and interdisciplinary, drawing on degrees in Architecture and City Policy as well as Law, and professional experience including senior roles on decision-making bodies in state and local government.

Keywords: Citizen activism, cycling, governance, infrastructure, streets

^{*}Speaker

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Scaffolding for Alternative Mobilities

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Abstract

The transport system is one of many systems at the heart of a polycrisis. A chronic failure to address climate change with a radical response intertwines with the creation of obesogenic environments and widening inequalities of access. Coupled with the outcomes of Covid-19, rising energy prices and a shift to right-wing politics which seek to deny or undermine the problems or blame them on other people or places, traditional approaches to transport policy making are challenged. Yet they persist, the path dependency of technical hegemonies and narrow narratives of growth through capital investment seek to close off other narratives. In the shadow of public policy, alternative futures are already playing out. Changes in patterns of youth mobility and driving, declines in distances driven, new blends of work and living and alternative cultures of slower mobility are all emerging. This is in spite of, not because of the policy frameworks they exist in. This paper describes work being undertaken in a project based in Leeds in the UK (INFUZE). Leeds was known for being part of Sir Colin Buchanan's famous 'Traffic in Towns' study in the 1960s which explored how to manage the transition to what Urry would later describe as a system of automobility. The self-proclaimed "Motorway City of the Seventies" it is now undergoing a transformation in thinking and has a vision to be a "city where you don't need to own a car". Such a shift has never been achieved anywhere in the world. INFUZE is exploring what such a vision would mean and how such a transformation could be delivered.

A year into the project, the paper will share how we are working with citizens through creative assemblies and schools workshops to build alternative visions, tackling Rob Hopkins critique that the biggest crises of all is a crisis of imagination. It will also explain how the research project will put its technical tools and knowledge at the service of the citizens, service providers and politicians to show what change could really look like in a city like Leeds. Whilst the presence of exciting social movements and on-going processes of social change offer hope for alternative futures, if a transformation is to be realised, it needs policy to recognise and actively design for such potential as a legitimate and desirable future. We discuss the challenges we foresee along the way.

Keywords: mobilities, transformations, knowledge, crisis, car, automobility

^{*}Speaker

Intermingling old and new mobility practices in the piecemeal of transformation

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Abstract

Abstract

The transformation of mobility practices and establishing alternative mobilities is inherently complex. Mobility practices are not only the grit of everyday life and thus need to cater to the organisational necessities of a multitude of other practices. Their seamless performance further highly depends on material infrastructures and individually ingrained social norms. The currently established mode of consolidating these conditions – the system of automobility – however is deeply problematic in ecological and social terms, necessitating the establishment of mobility alternatives in everyday life and beyond.

In this paper, I will present two cases of how alternative mobilities became established as new mobility practices alongside and intermingled with old mobility practices. The first case is on the establishment of sustainable commuting practices in real-world experiments. For a period of several months, participants trial alternatives to commuting by car and gradually learn to reorganize their everyday lives to embed these new ways of getting around. The second case is about the emergence of community carsharing in the commuter belt of Munich. Originating in a privately shared car amongst two families, over several decades carsharing associations spread in the heartland of car dependency. Its diffusion hereby is interdependent with automobilities and already existing mobility alternatives – amongst which car-less forms of commuting.

Both cases have in common that transformation comes as a piecemeal. Some of the old practices become replaced with alternatives. However, this requires some part of the old to remain, resulting in an interim mobility alternative waiting for continuous transformation. I thus argue that achieving climate just mobility alternatives is not a one-time effort shifting from the car to alternative mobilities. Rather mobility alternatives are a multi-step and multi-site effort in which old and new mobility practices intermingle, gradually transforming ways of being mobile and how their embedding into everyday life.

Author biography

Luca Nitschke is a research scientist at Institute for social-ecological research (ISOE) since November 2020. His work focuses on the interplay of practices and infrastructures in the social-ecological mobility transformation with a current thematic focus on commuting and train stations. He did his doctorate on practices of community carsharing and their role in bottom-up changes in the mobility system at TU Munich as a Hans Böckler Fellow. Luca Nitschke completed his Master in Environmental Studies in Barcelona, Aveiro, Aalborg and New York and his Bachelor in Environmental Sciences in Bielefeld.

*Speaker

Keywords: mobility practices, transformation, commuting, carsharing

Reimagining Mobility Futures: Infrastructures of Transformative Imagination

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Abstract

Envisioning ‘mobility alternatives’ and ‘alternative mobilities’ in the face of sustainability imperatives and social inequalities requires imagination – yet such imagination is often constrained. While future-oriented thinking is inherent in the theory and practice of mobility planning, imagined futures frequently remain within the boundaries of the dominant system of automobility and the frames of efficiency and optimization. In this paper, I argue for the need to cultivate ‘transformative imagination’ that challenges and thinks beyond the status quo, while staying grounded in principles of justice and ethics.

To explore how and when such imagination can emerge, I draw on the concept of ‘infrastructures of imagination’ to shift the gaze to the social and material conditions that foster imagination. I empirically investigate the imagination infrastructures of three Dutch planning projects that link sustainable mobility with energy and housing: an electric car-sharing initiative organized by energy cooperatives in Friesland, an autonomous electric shuttle in an industrial area in Helmond, and the search for sustainable mobility in the redevelopment of an urban neighborhood in Amersfoort. Using speculative interviews and participant observation, I trace the formation and circulation of mobility imaginaries, and examine the factors that enable or constrain more transformative forms of imagining. Initial findings suggest that limiting factors include a presentist bias, a focus on material and technological innovations, and a siloed approach that fails to connect mobility to transitions in other domains.

The conceptual framework developed here – infrastructures of transformative imagination – will be used in subsequent phases of this PhD project to design artistic futuring interventions that encourage planning practitioners to imagine beyond the status quo.

Keywords: imagination, imaginaries, futures, transformative, infrastructures of imagination

^{*}Speaker

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‘Subsidiary mobility’ and its results in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil)

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Université d’État de Rio de Janeiro [Brésil] – Brazil

Abstract

This paper examines the concept of ‘subsidiary mobility’ in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), understood as alternative modes of travel that, while complementing the formal network, remain secondary. These modes are linked to low-income populations and operate under precarious and informal conditions, competing with official systems without fully integrating, thereby constituting subordinate networks. In light of splintering urbanism (Graham & Marvin, 2001), such systems elude formal regulation and reproduce a logic of social and spatial exclusion (Harvey, 2002), exacerbating inequalities across the city—particularly in peripheral areas.

The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining georeferenced mapping of formal infrastructure (bus corridors, metro and rail lines) and informal services (collective taxis, vans, kombis, motorcycle taxis) with in-situ equipment assessments. Spatial analysis integrates urban “luminosity” and “opacity” indicators (Santos, 2002) to pinpoint the emergence of these subsidiary networks. The research also engages with the literature on peripheral mobility (Oliveira, 2022) and mobility justice (Sheller, 2018), thereby broadening its analytical scope.

Findings reveal that vulnerable segments of the population are excluded from formal networks by financial and access barriers, compelling them to rely on subsidiary systems that, though often operationally costly, offer greater flexibility. This dynamic produces a perverse outcome: alternative structures neither strengthen nor formalize, while competition undermines robust networks, resulting in a lose–lose scenario for urban mobility in Rio de Janeiro.

Filipe Marino is a professor of Architecture and Urbanism at the State University of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ). He holds a Ph.D. in Urbanism from PROURB–Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), and is a faculty member of the Postgraduate Program in Architecture and Heritage at UERJ. He coordinates the Mobility and Accessibility Research Group (NEMOBI/UERJ), which focuses on urban mobility, micromobility, energy transition, smart cities, and intersectional approaches to mobility in relation to race, gender, and age.

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*Speaker

Keywords: Subsidiary Mobility, Alternative Mobility, Peripheral Mobility, Rio de Janeiro.

Not to drive, not to walk: Litters and sedan chairs in the Graeco-Roman world

The litter (Latin: *lectica*, Greek: φορεῖον) and the sedan chair (Latin: *sella gestatoria*) form an underrepresented group of means of transport that nevertheless played an important role in certain circles in Europe, particularly in classical antiquity. What is known about the litter and the sedan chair with seat from this period?

Litters and sedan chairs were not common means of transport. In terms of speed, they were no match for transport by animal or by cart. Their speed was equal to or even slower than that of a pedestrian; bearers not only had to carry the load, but also had to ensure that the chair did not tip over, with all the consequences that entailed. Yet, especially within cities, distances were generally short, making walking an attractive alternative. It can be said that the litter and the sedan chair were reserved for certain target groups, which will be discussed below.

Back to maritimity: littoral and naval connections in the 18C Baltic Sea

Pavel Demchenko*¹

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Abstract

This paper explores how the mobility and communities were shaped in the 18 century Baltic region. Before the rise of wheel transport and construction of modern roads the maritime and river connections were crucial for the mobility in the region. Maritime connections set a specific practices and interactions what were named as littoral society. People who were enormously mobile and could sustain overseas connection privately were hardly accountable for the state. This combination of authorities' ignorance and cheap shipping allowed these littoral people to operate different endeavours. Becoming the invisible strings to connect little settlements and port cities as well they shaped identities and local market as well. After the local shipping was disrupted with several crises it is hard to imagine the former mobility in the East Baltic port such as Saint-Petersburg, Riga, Vyborg and Narva. This paper reconstructs the role of shipping mobility in the region. Actors involved in commercial activities in ports are considered in the perspective of maritime experience. Custom officers, shipmasters and merchants all participated to the commercial activities and coastal experiences of the ports of the Russian Empire. The paper traces the impact of spatial specifics on commercial and maritime practices in different ports of the Russian Empire, such as Saint-Petersburg, Riga, Vyborg and Narva. Pavel Demchenko, PhD student at Scuola Superiore Meridionale (Naples). I was a junior research fellow in HSE - Saint-Petersburg, experienced in the Eastern European and Eurasian studies. I focus on the maritime shipping and port mobilities in the 18th century Baltics.

Keywords: Maritime shipping, littoral shipping, Baltic, ports, mobility

*Speaker

People's Mobility at Baltic Sea 1837–1870: Case Study of Two Passenger Steam Ship Lines Called at Estonian Ports

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Abstract

Modernizing in the 19th century meant many different processes, that changed society at various levels. The development that started in the 19th century is characterized by the transition of new technologies and the introduction of new technical devices. Although the new technologies were introduced in various fields, a significant change occurred in transport. The steamship was introduced two decades earlier (in the study area for decades) than railways, therefore the study of coastal passenger steamers allows an explanation of how steamships changed mobility and movement patterns.

It must be acknowledged that studies on transport history are usually mostly focused on the establishment of infrastructure, but the infrastructure does not give any idea about the users of the infrastructure. Therefore, this study will pay attention to the passengers as the users of steamships, by asking who were those people travelling on the steamships and which groups of society most passengers came from? My aim is also to consider which conditions were on board the steamship for passengers with different ticket rates? How were the passengers divided between different passenger classes? How were the travel motives and destinations related to the social background of the passengers? Was there more men or women travelling around? What kind of travel patterns were used and were there some kind of groups travelling together?

This study is a part of transport and social history. It is a case study, that is focusing on two steamship lines, that were called to Tallinn and other Estonian ports. The main source for the study is the steamship passenger lists from 1850s and 1860s from which has made a large database (ca 30 000 voyages) of steamship passengers. Those two shipping lines were operated by companies from Turku and Riga; therefore, the study concerns also more or less those regions. The nationality or citizenship of the passengers varied, there were various ethnic groups from nowadays Estonia, but also from bordering countries as well as foreigners. Consequently, the study is not limited only with focusing on Estonians or people, who lived on these days in Estonia territory.

Keywords: passengers, mobility, steamship, coastal traffic, Baltic Sea

^{*}Speaker

Bicycles, Urban Mobility, and Everyday Life in Late Ottoman and Early Republican Istanbul through Servet-i Fünûn

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Abstract

This presentation explores how bicycles and cycling culture were represented in the pages of Servet-i Fünûn (The Wealth of Sciences), a prominent illustrated magazine published intermittently between 1891 and 1944 in Istanbul. Initially launched as the science and technology supplement to the newspaper Servet, the magazine gradually evolved under the direction of Ahmet İhsan into a weekly periodical that combined popular science, literature, travel writing, and urban commentary. By the turn of the twentieth century, Servet-i Fünûn had become a central platform not only for the modernization of Turkish literature but also for the circulation of ideas about technological novelties and urban life.

Focusing on articles, literary texts, travelogues, and urban observations that engage with the theme of cycling, this study offers a lens into how the bicycle entered the Ottoman imagination as both a symbol and tool of modernity. It investigates the cultural and infrastructural dynamics that facilitated or hindered the emergence of cycling in late Ottoman/early republican Istanbul and draws attention to the ways in which bicycles were associated with health, leisure, cosmopolitanism, and technological novelty.

By analyzing Servet-i Fünûn as both a literary and documentary source, the presentation highlights the intersection of everyday mobilities, media representations, and urban transformation in the late Ottoman period.

This study also serves as a first step toward a broader project on the history of cycling in Istanbul, from the late Ottoman period to the present day. The larger research aims to trace how the role of the bicycle has evolved within the city's shifting mobility landscape. It asks what kinds of urban, cultural, and political conditions have supported or obstructed the adoption of cycling over time. While some developments have promoted bicycle use, others have failed to take hold. Structural barriers-ranging from infrastructure and policy to social attitudes-continue to limit the broader adoption of cycling in Istanbul.

Keywords: Bicycle, Longitudinal

^{*}Speaker

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Passengers as a Pain Point: Experiences of Public Transport Travel in Germany's Frankfurt Rhine-Main region

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Abstract

This presentation introduces an ongoing study that examines the mobility experiences of railway commuters in Germany's Frankfurt Rhine-Main region. The project employs interviews and ethnography to explore how commuters perceive and navigate the atmospheres of commuter rail travel, paying particular attention to *affective* disruptions: moments of tension and friction among the commuter collective. It focuses on public transport users' experiences of transgressions of tacit codes of transit etiquette through fellow passengers (e.g. cutting in line, occupying multiple seats on a crowded train). While such mundane (mis)behaviors might seem banal at first, they impact experiences and perceptions of public transport travel, especially when occurring alongside operational disruptions such as delays and cancellations.

This presentation examines passenger perspectives on the social "pain points" of public transport travel in urban Germany. It investigates how encounters with fellow passengers impact the experience public transport travel, how passengers deal with moments of discomfort and conflict, and how the affective disruptions born from public transport environments' character as spaces of co-presence with diverse strangers intersect with the increasingly common operational disruptions shaping public transport travel in Germany.

Drawing on semi-structured interviews and ethnographic fieldwork in the Greater Frankfurt area, this project highlights the importance of looking beyond technical and operational aspects of public transport usage. Investigating how co-presence with diverse strangers affects travel comfort, the project sheds light on the role that affective atmospheres, socio-technical arrangements, and interpersonal dynamics play in shaping everyday mobility practices and modal choices.

Presenter profile

Christoph Schimkowsky is a Feodor Lynen Fellow at the Institute of Human Geography, Goethe University Frankfurt. Prior to his current position, he was a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Institute of Social Science, University of Tokyo, and a Visiting Research Fellow on the PUTSPACE (Public Transport as a Public Space) project. He received his PhD in Sociological Studies from the University of Sheffield (UK) in 2022. Christoph's research focuses on passenger experiences of public transport travel and the logics of transport companies' interaction with public transport users as passenger-customers. His work has appeared published in *Mobilities*, *Transfers*, *Applied Mobilities*, among others.

*Speaker

Keywords: public transport, urban mobilities, qualitative methods, ethnography, interviews, passenger experience, passenger behavior, disruptions, atmospheres, social norms

Gendered urban mobility: women's experiences of everyday mobility in public buses in Delhi, India

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Abstract

Historically, cities have been built by men but are inhabited by both men and women. Women's needs and priorities have been ignored in the design of human settlements and the provision of urban services like transportation etc. Women's participation in urban governance is also low, especially in India and their concerns are seldom featured in urban planning and policies. This systemic under-representation has led to ignorance of women's needs in urban and transport planning. This paper looks at women's experiences and interactions in public buses in Delhi. We look at bus-based public transit as a social space constructed out of social relationships and interaction among different stakeholders, physical infrastructure such as buses and bus stops. Space, as noted by Lefebvre and Massey, is produced by the day-to-day practices of people living and experiencing that physical space. The socio-cultural biases, spatial and temporal inequalities and differential power equations of gender relations manifest in public spaces to produce gendered public spaces. This conceptualisation helps us to situate women's experiences in public spaces. The present study employed mixed methods, including surveys, in-depth interviews and participant observation to collect data. Our study finds that gender power dynamics and hierarchy are reproduced in buses making them gendered. This results in different travel experiences for women in buses from that of men. The paper concludes that the conceptualisation of mobility needs to include what we call micro factors for urban mobility. Inclusion of these factors- such as daily experiences with the built environment, transit practices such as ticketing, boarding/alighting and waiting, commuters' mobility profile and social interactions in public transit can alter women's experiences in public spaces. Further, this study also argues that multi-dimensional sustainable public transport narratives must be politicised to ask the right questions and find gender-just, inclusive and socially sustainable answers.

Keywords: public transit, buses, women, everyday mobility, experiences, gender, space

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Slow Resistance: Rethinking Mobility through Encounters in Transit

Sanyogita Singh*¹

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Abstract

The bourgeois order posits motion as a metaphor for energy, positivity, and progress—a norm—while casting obstruction as delinquency. In the city of capital, motion becomes a fetish, redolent of Marinetti's "roaring motor car which seems to run on machine-gun fire." Late capitalist urbanism, following this trajectory, reorients its focus toward perception and attention. In doing so, it turns us into willing connivers in our own around-the-clock mobilities and exhaustions. The contemporary imaginary is one of permanent illumination, where the workday bleeds into night hours. This is inseparable from the non-stop operations of global exchange and circulation. Yet, amid the routine of lounge-to-lounge mobility and intensifying demands, 21st-century workers are growing disillusioned with 24/7 cognitive labour. Recent trends suggest a quiet renaissance of slower modes of locomotion—train journeys, bicycling, walking—as ways to reclaim and reproduce non-productive time. This paper explores the question of 'motion on the move' in the context of urban mobility in India, through a close reading of Monisha Rajesh's *Around India in 80 Trains*. It builds on the premise that motion exceeds the spatiotemporal displacement of already-formed beings. Rather, it is the ongoing process of their substantive formation within a mutating environment. Drawing on Ingold's ideas of movement and a post-Capitalocene imagination, the paper argues that this return to slow mobility is not only ecologically sustainable but also fosters affective correspondence with the world through perception and observation. These alternatives create occasions for a deeper coupling among things of the world. The paper in the process aims to counter the hallucination of presence in the non-places of airports and terminals, foregrounding instead the heterotopic encounters of the Indian railway compartment. Ultimately, slower mobilities offer alternative futures that prioritize sustainability and attentiveness, challenging the normative imperatives of speed at the heart of global mobility regimes.

Bionote-

Sanyogita Singh is a research scholar at the Department of English and Cultural Studies, Panjab University Chandigarh. Her research discusses the dynamic materiality of time and active temporality of matter within fiction. Further, she was the C. D. Narasimhaiah Prize runner-up at the annual IACLALS Conference in 2024 (the Indian Chapter of the International Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies).

Keywords: affect, heterotopia, India, motion, trains

*Speaker

Displaced Lives: Typhoon-Induced Mobility as a Lens on Social Inequality in Post-Haiyan Narratives

Honeylet Alerta*¹

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Abstract

This abstract examines representations of typhoon-induced mobility as a forced and often devastating alternative to the pre-existing immobility experienced by marginalized communities in selected essays from Merlie Alunan's edited anthology, "Our Memory of Water" (2016), which commemorates the devastation wrought by Super Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda) in the Visayan Islands in November 2013. Alunan introduces the deep connection of the Leyteno and Samareno people to the sea and rivers as sources of sustenance, commerce, and recreation, highlighting their recognition of the environment's inherent advantages. However, she argues that a prevailing anthropocentric worldview has contributed to environmental degradation, leaving these communities particularly vulnerable. While Waray poetry traditionally centers on human concerns, Alunan posits that Super Typhoon Haiyan violently disrupted the relative stability, exposing the precariousness of marginalized populations who often lack the resources for adequate shelter and evacuation. This catastrophic event triggered a forced mobility – displacement, loss of homes, and the struggle for survival – starkly contrasting with their prior socio-economic immobility. The essays within the anthology, therefore, explore how the typhoon not only caused physical displacement but also unveiled and exacerbated the existing vulnerabilities and lack of agency within these communities. By depicting this brutal "alternative mobility," the anthology underscores the urgent need for a shift in human consciousness and action towards environmental stewardship and social equity in the face of climate change, particularly for those most susceptible to its devastating consequences.

Keywords: Typhoon, induced mobilities, alternative mobility, post, Haiyan narratives, displacement, climate change

*Speaker

Donkeys and Drómos: Historic Preservation and Hydra's Archaic Mobility

Amanda Katz*¹

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Abstract

As many countries are currently trying to mitigate the unintended consequences of automobile culture, local and state administrations and officials are looking toward alternate forms of mobilities. In many instances, insular island communities offer a gateway for examine communities that minimize or regulate the use of automobiles. Of note is the island of Hydra, Greece. Due to a mid-twentieth century presidential decree, "no wheels" are permitted on the island. This includes cars, motorbikes, bicycles, and any other "wheeled vehicles." While there are few exceptions – municipal vehicles like garbage trucks – the historical preservation policies that denote Hydra as a historical national monument due to rich maritime history and role in Greek Independence are both progressive and regressive in their execution. Hydra is a community of narrow streets and steep steps and its archaic reliance on donkeys as the main form of transport serves the presidential decree to preserve the islands stunning architecture and character. The insularity of the island, paired with the protective preservation order, makes daily living on the carless island complicated. Medical services and fire safety services (the closest in Athens or Nafplion) are often a 90-minute ferryboat ride and then one hour taxi ride away. Also, most folks who live higher up on the island feel isolated; the elderly population and those with physical conditions that limit their mobility have but few options to get down to town. Walkable communities, or those that rely on alternate mobilities are worth researching and pursuing, but it is essential to consider the lived experience of individuals living within these spaces. This paper examines the idyllic Hydra's carless society and the complexities of this alternative mobility. While we can certainly learn and benefit from such, it is crucial to understand the ways in which policy, economy, and politics play into such possibilities.

Keywords: transportation, infrastructure, island communities, historic preservation, Greece

*Speaker

From Walking to Public Transit Ropeway: Mobility Alternatives and Urban Space in Banaras

Vanya Jaiswal*¹

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Abstract

In Banaras, tapered alleys, stepped ghats, and the dense city centre make walking a necessity. However, pedestrianism is not merely a spatial prerequisite, but it is also the very crux of the convivial ethos of the city's multicultural and multireligious society. The constricted streets that can barely facilitate the passage of two-wheelers demand people to be attentive to others, normalize accidental proximity with strangers, and accommodate human-non human entanglements. Though walking remains the mainstay of mobility practices in the city, it does not compensate for the lack of a reliable and accessible public transport system. Recently, under the Smart City Mission, the local authorities have been compelled to think of mobility alternatives that would cater to the locals as well as the huge influx of tourists and pilgrims and alleviate road congestion. In view of this, India's first public transit ropeway system has been introduced in Banaras.

In this paper, I intend to examine how new transport infrastructures interface with existing modes of movement in Banaras. Rather than pitching walking and the ropeway as competing forms of mobilities, the paper argues that they represent distinct but potentially complementary spatial logics; one grounded, embodied, and rhythmic, the other elevated, rapid, and tech-fuelled. Undergirded by Henri Lefebvre's notion of spatial triad and drawing on insights from auto-ethnography and media pieces, this study seeks to address the negotiations and tensions embedded in urban mobility planning in an ancient, heritage city in the Global South, the risks associated with treating walking as peripheral to other mobilities and the ways in which urban space and mobility alternatives are co-constitutive. This paper advocates for mobility planning that acknowledges the lived sensibilities of the inhabitants in conceiving new forms of transport that are inclusive and attuned to a complex cultural matrix.

Author Bio: Vanya Jaiswal is a final year doctoral student at the Department of English and Cultural Studies, Panjab University, Chandigarh, India. She was born and raised in Varanasi. Her research interests include urban space and how it shapes the everyday practices of people. Her thesis is titled "Interpreting Varanasi-scapes, Post 2000: A Critical Study of Selected Texts." It examines how ideological constructions, the interaction of embodied practices with the material environment of the city and the often overlooked quotidian lives of people produce the cityscape.

Keywords: walking, ropeway, mobility alternatives, heritage city, lived realities, urban space

*Speaker

Cycling or Public Transit? The Shifting Choices of Residents in a Mountain City

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Abstract

This study investigates shifting transportation preferences in mountainous urban areas, using Chongqing (China) as a case study. Historically, bicycle usage was negligible in core districts like Yuzhong and Nan'an due to steep terrain. While shared bicycles were introduced alongside national trends, shared e-bikes emerged as the dominant adaptation to topographic challenges. In Nan'an District's hilly areas, e-bikes now function as key "last-mile" connectors to rail transit, directly competing with traditional feeder buses. Focusing on post-implementation dynamics, the research explores: (1) residents' preferences between e-bikes and buses for rail transit connectivity, (2) competitive and complementary relationships between these modes, and (3) policy interventions to harmonize their development. Findings highlight how mountainous geography amplifies reliance on e-bikes for short-distance travel, disrupting conventional transit ridership. The study underscores the need for tailored governance strategies—such as spatial zoning, fare integration, and infrastructure upgrades—to optimize multimodal coordination while addressing equity and sustainability concerns.

Keywords: shared e, bikes, feeder buses, mountainous cities, transportation policy, modal competition.

^{*}Speaker

Seaweed infrastructures: anchoring slippery mobilities

Jen Southern^{*†1} and Lynne Pearce^{‡1}

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Abstract

What can we learn about mobility infrastructures from seaweed? In 1928, British scientist Kathleen Drew collected seaweed and observed it releasing spores. When she added a shell, the spores anchored and started to grow. Understanding this relationship between mobility and anchoring led to modern seaweed cultivation. Seaweed can anchor on both natural and human-made substrates. Offshore oil, gas, and wind farm infrastructures are proposed as sites for seaweed farming, and mitigation for migratory bird loss is proposed by locating seaweed habitats and feeding grounds away from wind farms.

Seaweed is important infrastructure for growth, both as a habitat and as the gelling agent agar. An estimated 85 million agar plates are used annually in the UK, underpinning a wide range of scientific research. Agar was introduced to microbiology by Fanny Hesse (1882), who noticed it initially in the kitchen. It travels globally in oceans and foodstuffs, and its constituent elements, such as iodine, perform micro-mobilities in the human body.

Seaweed provides infrastructure in more-than-human assemblages, it is food for both livestock and humans, it is used as fertiliser in agriculture, seaweed sequesters carbon and releases oxygen, and is proposed as mitigation for increasing levels of global CO₂. However, climate and environmental change directly affect seaweed, and it is adapting and migrating.

Seaweed herbaria appear pressed in books in historical archives, and in watery flasks in contemporary living research archives (Scottish Association for Marine Science), containing living seaweed samples that have been grown and reproduced for over 100 years by skilful archivists.

In this paper, we lay the groundwork to propose seaweed as a model organism for the study of more-than-human mobilities infrastructures. Slippery mobilities that can both: need and become infrastructure; exist dry and wet in collections; be fertiliser and food; be sensitive to climate change and resilient.

Jen Southern is Director of the Centre for Mobilities Research (Cemore) at Lancaster University and Senior Lecturer in Fine Art and New Media. For over 30 years her art practice research has engaged with mobilities and has been exhibited in Australia, Canada, Europe, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand and USA. She co-curated exhibitions at conferences Global Mobility Futures (2013) and Mobile Utopia: Pasts, Presents, Futures (2018) and Im—mobile Lives in Turbulent Times (2021) and Rocky Futures for T2M Mobilities, Aesthetics, ethics (2023). With Kaya Barry she instigating the Jisc Art and Mobilities research network. <http://jensouthern.net>

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Keywords: seaweed, mobilities, infrastructure

Creative preservation as a new paradigm for codesigning mobility systems : the "VéLis" scenarios in Laval, Quebec.

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Abstract

Tackling the complex urban challenges of mobility transition, especially in car-dependent regions like in Quebec, demands more than incremental adjustments; it requires fundamentally new visions. This presentation highlights co-design, facilitated by social designers (Abrassart and al., 2015) and local orchestrators, as a powerful approach to navigate this complexity by directly engaging diverse stakeholders in rethinking the mobility of tomorrow. To do so, we use conceptive foresight ("prospective conceptive") (Amar, 2015; Abrassart and Scherrer, 2021) to articulate and explore the unknown, employing narrative scenarios not just as descriptive tools, but as active "projecting concepts" derived from C-K (concept-knowledge) design theory (Hatchuel & Weil, 2003; 2009).

Our research focuses on Light Intermediate Vehicles (VéLis) (Bigo and al., 2022) within Laval, Quebec. The goal of this innovative approach is "**creative preservation**" as a new design paradigm (Le Masson and al., 2023): addressing the paradox of maintaining the mobility system's desirable attributes (access, freedom) while drastically reducing its negative impacts. This requires innovating the "modal *system*" itself (Usus, regulations, infrastructure and mode - Héran, 2021), not just the vehicle as it is often observed. Thus we generated **four contrasting 2050 scenarios** for Laval, embodying different governance/urban form futures, and each scenario explores one new configuration of the velis deployment in the city of Laval, Qc. These scenarios function explicitly as **projecting concepts**, designed to push collective thinking beyond current constraints and explore more radical reconfigurations.

This presentation demonstrates how embedding these scenarios within a **co-design framework** opens crucial **creative spaces**. It empowers stakeholders to confront the preservation paradox and collectively re-imagine the entire mobility system's interaction with the territory. This method fosters innovation that is truly alternative to the status quo, essential for navigating sustainable transitions especially when it confronts wicked problem and great challenges.

Keywords: Sustainable mobility, prospective, innovative design, collective design, Creative preservation, light and small vehicles

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The concept of car-free and "bicycle-friendly" inner cities in the Federal Republic of Germany from 1985 to 2025 - a historicization

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Abstract

The concept of "car-free inner cities" emerged in the 1960s as an alternative to mass car motorization in transport planning, local politics and the environmental movement - initially as a vision and, since the 1980s at the latest, as concrete transport concepts. In combination with the promotion of inner-city cycling, this has been a central component of inner-city traffic planning to this day (such as the "Bicycle City Berlin" concept introduced in 1985). Against the background of the astonishing persistence and increasing importance of these concepts - despite the actual increase in car registrations - the lecture examines the possibilities of historicizing urban transport concepts beyond automobile traffic. It attempts to contribute to an objectification of the debates between supporters and opponents, some of which are conducted as fundamental disputes.

The main focus is on three points:

{1} How did the justification contexts for a car-free urban transport policy change during the period under investigation (in terms of protecting people from noise, pollutants, accidents, protecting nature and the climate; the change in urban planning aesthetics or safety in - increasingly accelerated - bicycle traffic as well as competition among the individual modes of transport).

{2} The persistence of the demand for car-free and "bicycle-friendly" inner cities right up to the present day indicates that implementation has not been successful since the 1980s. The time series of car registration figures also show a contrary trend. How did both affect the implementation concepts?

{3} Finally, to what extent does the ongoing debate about car-free and "bicycle-friendly" inner cities appear to be an indicator of an increasing social divide?

To answer these questions, the lecture focuses on the period from 1985 to 2025, with a spatial focus on the cities of Berlin, Frankfurt am Main and Wuppertal.

Bio:

Veit Damm is an research associate at the department of economic history at the University of Siegen (Germany). He has published widely on the history of transport, economic crises and the history of subsidy policy in Western Europe and corporate history. He recently published a study on 'Technologies for traffic management and wireless information on roads and waterways in Europe' (with C. Franke).

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Keywords: transport policy, transport planning, local politics, concepts of car, free and "bicycle, friendly" inner cities

Taking the bus lane or the car lane? Cycle highways and public transport networks between complementarity and concurrence

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Abstract

Cycle highways have gained a momentum in France since the COVID-19 crisis, with over 20 projects launched in various cities and regions. These infrastructural projects aim at providing safe and comfortable cycling conditions through separated and large cycling infrastructure. French planners build on the Dutch and Danish cycle highways to design these infrastructure networks connecting city centres and the outskirts of the urban agglomeration to enable cycling trips over 5km for suburban dwellers. While cycling is still at a low level in a car-dominated mobility system in France, these cycling infrastructure projects highlight the political endorsement of cycling as a legitimate mode of "mass transportation". While on paper these projects are pretty consensual, their implementations raise many discussions among local stakeholders regarding budgets, space planning and the arbitrages between the different modes of transportation, especially cycling and public transport.

This communication aims to analyse how these cycle highways projects are conceived and implemented in relation to existing and upcoming public transport networks. While cycling is often conceptualised as a good first or last mile solution for rail-based transport, we argue that the cycling express networks often overlap with public transport networks and can even compete with them on street infrastructure. We conducted 25 semi-directive interviews with stakeholders from four intercommunalities in France, Bordeaux Métropole, Greater Lyon, Toulouse Métropole and Greater Châtellerauld. Building on these four case studies, we will show how the implementation of cycle highways challenges the role and space of bus services by removing bus lanes or developing mixed bus-bike lanes, while strengthening the perceived relevance of the bike-train combination for middle to long distance trips. Taking a step back, we want to build on these case studies to discuss how these cycling infrastructural projects might highlight a more systemic change in politics of mass transportation.

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Keywords: Cycling, public transport, complementarity, concurrence, cycle highways

Small-scale conflicts between cyclists and other modes of transport in a large Latin America metropolis

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Abstract

As a sustainable form of transportation, cycling is being promoted by most governments worldwide. Despite the positive impacts of cycling, conflicts between cyclists and other street users such as pedestrians, cars and buses have increased, especially in countries lacking proper cycling infrastructure. This research aims to understand a series of conflicts experienced by cyclists in Santiago de Chile, where cycling has expanded rapidly in the last fifteen years and currently represents 7.8% of all trips.

A total of three focus groups were held with cyclists having different levels of experience. The participants were asked to describe the main conflicts with other modes of transport and road users, as well as the coping strategies employed to deal with these conflicts. An inductive analysis ended with four categories related to cyclists' conflicts in the streets and two related to strategies and lessons dealing with motorized vehicle drivers and other cyclists.

The analysis indicates that the unequal distribution of road space negatively influences cyclists' experiences, who constantly perceive themselves as being threatened by overtaking cars in close proximity and by different forms of verbal and physical aggression. The lack of cycling infrastructure often makes cyclists use bus-only lanes, creating new small-scale conflicts. On the other hand, cyclists rarely reported conflicts with pedestrians. Finally, cyclists develop various strategies to mitigate conflicts, ranging from making themselves visible at all times to making use of bodily gestures.

When conflicts can still escalate, most participants tend to escape from the scene using inaccessible routes. Some declared even using their bicycles as shields in violent events. Yet most cyclists recognize that violent outbursts are problematic and friendly conversation is the norm.

The results suggest that, in auto-centric urban contexts, cycling is a challenging chore surrounded by the sensation of having fragile entitlements.

Keywords: small, scale conflicts, cyclists, cycling infrastructure, Santiago

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